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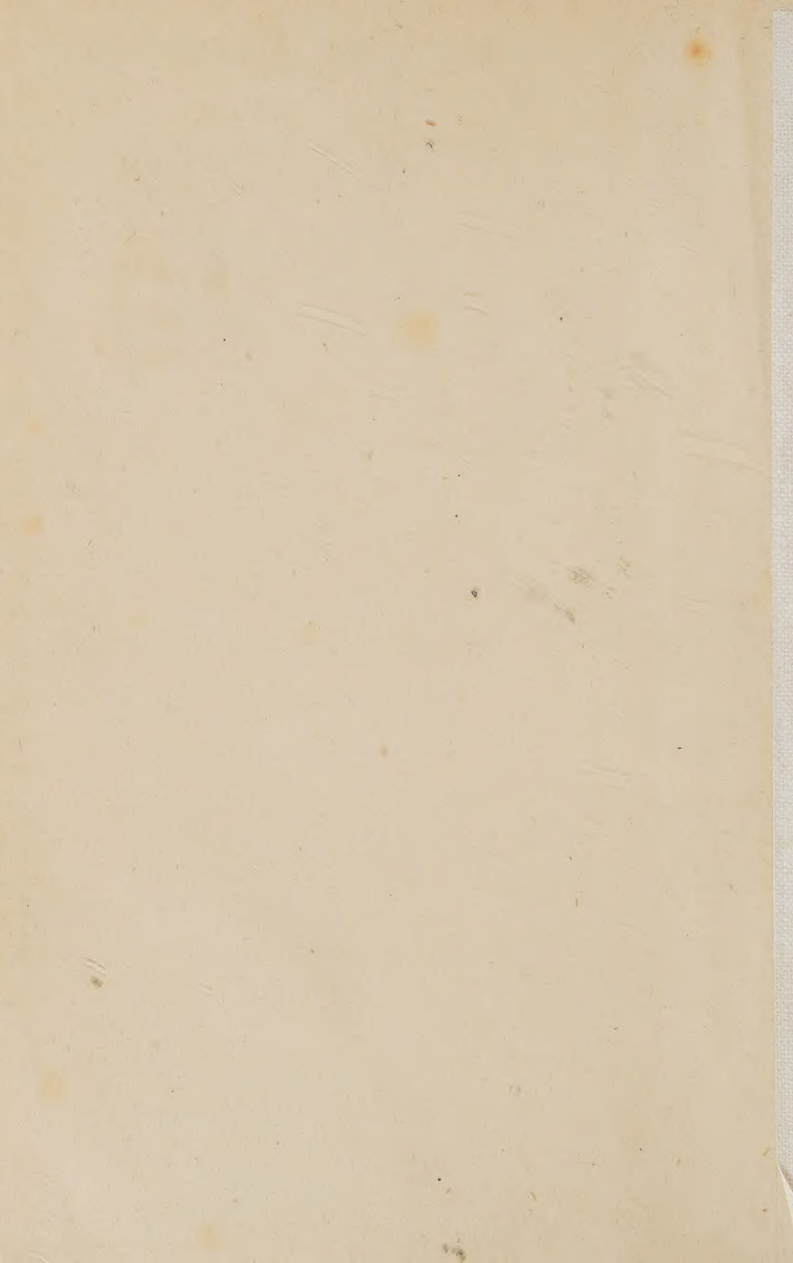
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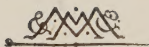


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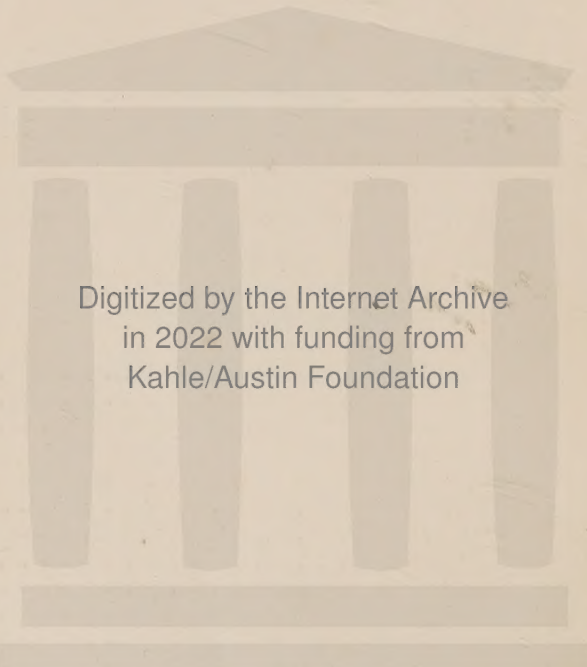
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CHAPTER I

HONOR'S HOUSEHOLD

WHERE the girl sat was under a whin-bush that grew out of an earth fence by the roadside. The road was empty, and its grassy margins made "the long acre," as the people called it. Her mother's two cows were grazing "the long acre" and the girl under the whin-bush was watching that they entered no man's gaps nor broke no man's fences.

She was neither tall nor short, neither slender nor thick-set, and her age was about eighteen. What was striking about her was her hair: it was redder than chestnut; it was red-gold in places, and in places had gold in it that was like the pale gold of the whin-blossom; it was a head that should be carried well, a head with an oriflamme of hair.

Where she sat she could hear cocks, geese and dogs make their proper and customary proclamations; she could hear her young sister call "yebb, yebb, yebb," to the young turkeys outside her mother's house. It was in April then, and the whins or furze were in their fullest blossom: they made beds of golden bloom in the grazing fields; they made bunches of blossom on the earth fences, and they drew over the rocky hillside an extravagance of

golden bloom. The whin-bush she sat under was high as a laburnum tree; bush over bush it grew, each bush a bouquet of golden blossoms growing so close together that a bee could hardly break through them.

Now as the girl looked down the road after the red cow and the little white and blue one she saw a man on horseback coming towards her. The horse swerved and pranced and galloped. It was an eccentric beast with a smooth dun body, shaggy brown legs, and a shapeless head. The young man who was riding it held the horse's head up with a rein of rough rope. Immediately it came into the girl's head that this was the young man who was expected at her mother's house.

He steadied the horse when he came to where she sat. "Does Honor Paralon live near here?" he asked. It was her mother he named. Her household was matriarchal, and the mother went by her unmarried name.

"Go to the end of the road," the girl said, "turn to the right, and then go up the bohereen to the left."

He was not what she expected him to be. Still he was odd-looking. He wore a wide foreign hat fastened with a strap that went around his chin. He had on a good blue overcoat, and it was belted with another strap. His eyes seemed droll. But they were really as quick as the eyes of a wild creature. His face would not be described as a strange face. Still, if one tried to draw it one would find that there was something extraordinary in it: a stroke could make it a child's face or an old man's face, but no

drawing could make it a youth's face. And yet there was something virile in the young man's look. He had an eager, friendly gaze, and a half puzzled smile that meant—"I know I'm foolish, but I have to go on with this."

Having given him the direction the girl added: "I'm Honor Paralon's daughter, Brighid Moynagh, and you're welcome to this part of the country, Francis Gillick."

Evidently Francis Gillick had not a ready tongue; the horse started off before he could make a reply.

It was Brighid's task to keep the cows on the roadside until they had eaten enough to ruminate over; after that she would drive them into the rather bare grazing-field; having fed and having rambled they would be content there, and they would have no will to break into the meadow at the other side of the fence. She curtailed their cropping now and turned them back along the road and towards the grazing-field that her mother owned.

As she neared the gate she met Nannie Gilroy, her cousin, coming from the well. "I hear," said Nannie, "that you are going to have a boy to walk out with you."

"Who might he be?" said the younger girl sharply.

"The lad that's coming to your house—he's mad, isn't he?"

"He's likely to have as much wit as the people about here."

"But wasn't he going to be made a priest?"

"You know all about it, Nannie, so you needn't be asking me."

"I'm going round to your mother's to see him when he comes," said Nannie. "I'll bring your mother a clutch of eggs for an excuse." Fat, fair, and lazy Nannie Gilroy laughed. She laughed showing her dimples. And such lazy mockery on her cousin's part often exasperated Brigid Moynagh; it seemed to come from a superior position—she was beyond the range of nervous disturbance; it was that that gave Nannie her advantage.

"No excuse is needed for your visit, Nannie," Brigid Moynagh said. Already she was vexed to think that Nannie Gilroy would be laughing in her shawl at the young man who had come to her mother's house.

Nannie Gilroy took up her pail of water and went on and Brigid Moynagh opened the gate and turned the two cows into the grazing-field.

* * * * *

A fortnight before a relative of her mother's, Considine Gilroy, had come into the house in the early part of the day. He did not speak of his business until he had lighted his pipe at the coal preparatory to leaving. Then he brought Honor outside and told her of his errand.

Considine had another relative, a young man who had been intended for the priesthood. He had gone to the Irish College in Salamanca in Spain. People thought that he would soon come back as a priest. Then, a few years ago, it had been rumoured that all was not going well with this young man—some misfortune, it seemed, had come upon him. Soon it

was known that some of his relatives were striving to bring him back to Ireland. But in London he had joined a ship and gone on a voyage to some unknown part. Last Christmas he had turned up at his father's house.

In that part of the country a "spoilt" priest means a "spoilt" man, and more—a "spoilt" family. It was assumed that Francis Gillick's mind had become deranged. His family showed hostility to him—hostility because of the conspicuous failure on their part that he denoted. They watched him, and they talked over everything that he did. His reasonableness puzzled them more than anything else in him. And his presence kept their misfortune public. They were anxious to get him out of the neighbourhood.

It was at this point that the friendly and sagacious Considine intervened: he proposed that Francis should go over to the other side of the county to work for Honor Paralon who had but little help. Then he had come to Honor's and had persuaded her to take this unusual laborer. And so, for a season, Francis Gillick would be under Honor Paralon's roof.

* * * * *

Brighid Moynagh left the cows in the grazing-field and went towards her mother's house. At the same time her uncle, Owen Paralon, the peddler, was coming towards the same place from another direction.

That morning Owen Paralon had gone into the town of Cahirmoy, the little town that was about

two miles away. Having finished his peddler's circuit he stopped at a friendly house at the outskirts of the town to lay his pack away, to change his linen, and to make himself presentable in the face of a very momentous interview. There was a meeting of magistrates that day, and Sir John Seagrave, the owner of the town, would be in Cahirmoy. The day had come when Owen Paralon, a would-be possessor, would have to bring himself and his plea before a very absolute possessor.

In the big Sessions Inn the owner of the town was having luncheon. Opposite him sat his agent, the solicitor David Moore. Sir John did not address him. He ate with his brows bent over his plate.

He was an admiral, and he might be taken as a generalization of all admirals. Still, there was something personal in his eyes—they were little and close together—eyes that showed an intense sense of self-interest. He had a long pitted red face, a purple beard and overgrown eyebrows. He was now muttering a hearty complaint against the quality of the salmon that had been set before him.

As an admiral, a magistrate, and a landowner he had a triple right to be domineering. When the inn-keeper entered the room, and, having served the fowl, made an announcement that there was a man below who waited on his honor's convenience, he grunted:

"Who is he?"

"Paralon—Owen Paralon, your honor, Sir John."

"I told the man you might see him to-day, Sir John," said David Moore smoothly. "He is coming about the house you have empty in the town."

"Send him up when I take my brandy," said Sir John.

The inn-keeper was a depressed sort of body. But he insisted upon a certain familiarity between himself and these people of importance—he held himself as if he were a claimant for something. Now he stood behind David Moore's chair, and he said, "these fellows are climbing up."

"Paralon, you mean," said David Moore.

"Oh, you know who I mean—him and the like of him," said the lantern-jawed inn-keeper. "Mind you," said he, "they'll be putting themselves above you and me."

David Moore knew what this Cassandra behind his chair was referring to.

"You know when to bring him up to Sir John," he said. Thereupon he dropped the inn-keeper. Hughie Magrane eyed him and eyed Sir John as if he had a grievance in being thus dropped by chief and subordinate. He went out of the room and closed the door.

Sir John gobbled his fowl and David Moore turned over some papers that were before him. David Moore had an English father and an Irish mother. His father, a soldier, was old when he had married a girl of the O'Gara family.

In David Moore the Irish and the English elements had made an equal amalgam: he was quick-witted, eloquent, biting; he was individualistic, orderly, assuming; he was courageous. He had flung his father aside when he found out that the old soldier was about to deprive him of an inheritance. When his mother lay dying, a priest, a friend

of his mother's people, had tried to win her back to the faith and practice of the Catholic religion. Young Moore had turned the priest from the door, and from that day he had a bitter sense of Catholic encroachment.

A young man such as he was bound to acquire leadership of some sort. In that county that bordered the Ulster plantation counties and that had been partially planted there was a sectarian order that aimed at perpetuating the ascendancy of the religion that was socially dominant. That ascendancy lay in the feudal ownership of the land and in the control of the towns with their little industries. David Moore had come to be a leader in the order: he was superior to those who composed it; indeed, in different surroundings and circumstances he would have taken a liberal interest in every dogma, theology and philosophy, for he had a good deal of a disinterested mind.

"According to the old lease, Sir John," he said, "you have to exact a fine from this man Paralon if it is his intention to open a business in the town."

"I know. The man's a Roman Catholic," said Sir John.

"He is," said David Moore.

Then Owen Paralon was let come in.

"Well, my man?"

"I came to see your honor because I am wishful to become a tenant of yours in the town."

The man with the dark face and the energized movements was different from the petitioners who were wont to stand before him, hat in hand.

"You want to start business in Cahirmoy?"

"I do, sir."

"You are a Roman Catholic?"

"Yes."

"According to lease I have to exact a fine from any Roman Catholic who wants to start a business in my town."

"Anything in reason, your honor."

David Moore never tried to conceal a relish he had for watching Sir John gore and pitch such as Owen Paralon. The frankness of his interest in the situation made him seem quite friendly.

"Moore will tell you what fine I have to get from you."

"One hundred and fifty pounds, Sir John," said Moore in a resonant voice that contrasted with Owen Paralon's harsh tones.

"Make it less than that, your honor," said Paralon, coming near to the table. "I'm a poor man," he added hurriedly.

Sir John, who had been held back from his ordinary goring and pitching by this man's reserve, now plunged at him. "The devil you are!" he cried. Paralon's last phrase was one that he was constantly hearing. "What do you mean by talking to me like that? You're well dressed—damme if you haven't as good clothes on your back as any one in my house! What do you mean by standing up before my table and saying you're a poor man? You're beggars—beggars, everyone of you. Beggars bred! Beggars from the cradle up! Damme, you are!"

A flush came into Owen Paralon's cheeks. "I don't like to be called names, Sir John. I'm before

you on business. I'll pay a fine in reason, but what I have has taken me a long time to earn."

"But you can earn it," said Sir John. "According to yourselves you're not let earn anything. I feel damn like refusing you," said he. He could not understand how a prospective tenant—a man of the lower deck—could stand before his table with unaverted gaze and even address him directly.

"I did not expect to be asked to pay so much of a fine."

"I'll fine you every penny of it," said the admiral heartily. "Step up to it now, or sheer off."

"I'll have to step outside for a minute to think it over," said Owen Paralon.

"Think it over. I'll be here, or you can talk to Moore about it."

Then Owen Paralon went out and into the street of Cahirmoy. He had three hundred pounds. He would have to renovate the shop that he wanted to take over; he would have to buy wool, pay his workers and meet his rent. It would be difficult. But he had set his heart upon becoming a merchant in this place.

Owen Paralon had all the instincts of a merchant albeit he had to carry the most of his stock-in-trade across his shoulders. His father had left him a few guineas. He laid the money out on the slight articles that the peddlers hawked around—thread, combs, chap-books, kerchiefs, knives, pictures and so on. He had come to lend out small sums. He exchanged articles in his pack for moieties of the fleece and had come to have a business in wool. He often had a good stock of wool in his sister's house.

Through this trade in wool he would reach the status of a merchant. The town of Cahirmoy was the place in which he would begin. Cahirmoy was on the road to Dublin and Drogheda and the buyers of woollen fabrics came there. The people around had a skill in weaving and their work was known, and so there was a good prospect here for the man who would open out as a buyer of wool and a manufacturer of woollen fabrics. Owen Paralon had set his mind on a particular house where there was a store-room and a workshop with a loom.

For years Owen's project had been thought of and discussed in Honor's house, and now Owen had gone to Sir John Seagrave without having spoken to his sister. Honor would have been agitated and despairful. He thought now that paying so much money as a fine he would not be able to leave her any on going from her house. In a year, he thought, he might be able to get together a dowry for Brighid.

He went as far as the hedges; then he turned back, and again went into the wide court-yard of the Lock Inn. It was remarkable that there should be an inn there at all. It stood beside a canal which, in the old days, had been the high-way to Dublin. The traffic went another way now, and the inn, huge as a barrack, was now as obsolete as the toll-house.

And it had once served as a barrack. Those high, white-washed walls that were faced with stone, the yard with its empty offices and outhouses had a history that made its hugeness, gauntness and isolation significant. Dragoons had occupied it; they lit a fire, the story went, in the court-yard to celebrate

the hangings and floggings they had carried out. It was traditional with the landowners and their train to give their custom to the Lock Inn.

Owen Paralon met Sir John Seagrave crossing the yard. "Pay the money at Moore's office. You needn't come to my house. Good day to you," was what the admiral said.

Hughie Magrane, the inn-keeper, looked at him as he came to the door of the inn. "You're going to get that place in the town, think of that," he said, "and you that was used to convoying with a pack on your back. It's a lift in the world for you, and for the whole lot of you."

Owen Paralon made no reply.

"You were industrious—I'll say that for you," said Hughie Magrane as if giving unwilling recommendation. "You were a sober fellow. Very unlike the people hereabouts. I suppose we'll have to be calling you 'Mister Paralon' after this."

"You'd better begin calling it to me now," said Owen Paralon, with a flash of humour as he went out of the inn-yard. Owen Paralon was much younger than his sister; he was a man of forty now, loosely-built and swarthy, with lank hair. He had in him something that made him different from his sister's neighbours—"the drop of Cromwell," they said, to account for Owen Paralon's occasional harshness, for his keeping to himself.

* * * * *

He left the town. He walked at his good pace through a country that was all green hilliness: to

his right and left and all the way before him were slopes and rises of varied green—a slope of emerald meadow; a hilly grazing-field, rough and grey beside it; a patch of dark green potatoes; a brighter field of growing oats. The country with its slopes and rises and its varied greens was like a robe that was drawn up into tucks, bright and faded and stained, and crossed here and there with seams that were hedges marking the little fields.

The hedges were high: they were of hawthorn that was not yet in blossom, but here and there was a slight bloom that showed the sloe-bushes mixed with the hawthorn. It was a country of ash-trees, and these, too, were in their fresh greenness. They stood up in the hedges; they grew by twos and threes in the fields; they stood about houses that were near the road. Twice Owen Paralon went by where different and more ancient trees grew together; they marked a rise that was a “rath” or an old earthen fort—in this district there was a remarkable number of them. In the green of the fields there were whin-bushes with their extravagance of golden bloom. Through such green hilliness his road went, and it brought him to the bohereen with its high hawthorn hedges that went up to his sister's house.

When he came before the house he saw that Considine Gilroy's protégé had arrived. A young man was standing on a rise of ground nearby, apparently making a survey of the fields. Brighid—he came upon her as he turned up the bohereen—told him that the young man had just arrived.

For her uncle Brighid Moynagh had an impas-

sioned affection. This vital feeling of hers may have been part of an inheritance, for it had often been remarked in the Gilroy family, all of whom had powerful affinities with each other. Owen Paralon was away when his sister had married; when he came back there were two children, Brighid and Oona, and Honor's husband was dead. Owen became Brighid's foster-brother. He used to carry her in his arms, and when she was more than an infant he used to take her to places far-off; he would show her the squirrels in the wood, or he would sit with her in the nut-dell, or carry her up the stairs of some ruined tower where the jackdaws had their nests. It was he who had brought her the books that she had read and kept, and it was he who had brought her to someone who had taught her the fiddle. She could sing, and when she was eager about songs he brought her to every old man and old woman, to every boy and girl around the place, who had a lovely song that might be taught her.

Honor Paralon was there to meet the working-guest with dignity before the door. He came in, smiling in a friendly but rather rueful fashion. He and Owen Paralon shook hands. They were all within the house now, and after they had talked for a while Owen made a sign to his sister, and the two went into the upper room to talk over the day's happenings. The room they had gone into was a sort of sitting-room where the priest had breakfast when there was a "station" in the house. No one but Owen slept in it. The lower room was where Brighid, her sister and her mother slept. The

working-guest would sleep in the settle-bed that was now closed as a bench against the wall.

* * * * *

The kitchen, which was the living-room in Honor Paralon's, was narrow, with smoke-browned walls and blackened rafters. The two tables by the walls, the three-legged stools and the four-legged stools, the backed chair that Honor sat on, all were scrubbed to the grain. This was Oona's doing; she was strong and painstaking with the scrub.

It was Oona who had made the fresh fire that was on the hearth: in the core were the hard black turfs that were taken out of an especially good rick, and at the outside were bits of the flakey, brown wood that was dug out of the bog—bog-deal they called it. The fire burned with a clear brightness; the country people would say that it showed a good heart in the girl who made it.

Francis Gillick was at the fire. He was fixing a broken riding-whip that he had found on the road; Oona was near him, and Brigid was at the table making ready the oaten bread they would bake that night. Francis Gillick now gave a quick glance towards the door as someone came to it.

It was Nannie Gilroy. She went to him giggling. "You're welcome to this country," she said.

"*Gracias,*" he said.

"Is it Latin you'll be talking to me?" said Nannie in a soft convulsion of laughter.

"The señorita is entertained!"

"Oh, Lord, I'll be killed at you!" Nannie pulled

Oona down beside her and tickled her into giggling. Brighid was greatly annoyed. She opened the door of the lower room and said, "Nannie Gilroy is here, mother."

"What would you say," Nannie said to Francis Gillick, "if we asked you to a dance?"

"*Gracias, señorita?*"

Certainly this visitor regarded him as a droll and witless creature. "Maybe," she said, "you wouldn't like it if we asked you to the dance when the moon was full?"

"Why not, *bella señorita?*"

"We mightn't know what you might do to us?"

"Nannie Gilsenin, you're unmannerly," said Brighid, and her words were like the muffled thump she gave her cousin's shoulder.

"I'm only joking." Nannie turned to Francis Gillick. "Don't you know I'm only joking?"

"I know," he said gravely, "that you're amongst the number that think I'm wanting in understanding."

"If you come to our dance we'll think you have the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost."

". . . Understanding, Knowledge, Fortitude, Piety, and the Fear of the Lord," he said.

"How well he knows them," Nannie whispered loudly to Oona. "Wouldn't one easily know that he was near-handed priested?"

Francis Gillick heard the allusion to his misfortune. He tossed the whip-handle into the fire and sat watching the burning peat with a wrinkled brow. Brighid was indignant with Nannie Gilroy. She already was Francis's partisan. To talk to him

like that! And he a poor boy disgraced and repudiated by his own kin! So pleasant besides, and one that many an interest adhered to! She plucked Nannie's dress. "If you're staying, sit down," she said rudely.

Honor, out of the upper room, spoke to Nannie. "No, Honor, I won't stay, for Brighid isn't agreeable to me." Nevertheless, Nannie would have stayed if she did not have another house to go to. She went, drawing Oona with her. Brighid stayed for a while at the door.

* * * * *

Night was coming on; the geese cackled now and then, and they shook out white wings as they went past the stack of black turf in the gathering dark. There was great quietness in the country around. The night before Brighid had heard a corncrake in a meadow far away; soon there would be the corncrakes to listen to when one stood at the doorway in the gathering dark.

Here was Oona back. She had not gone far with Nannie. It was easy to guess that Nannie Gilroy had met with a boy on the road. It was a lovely evening to be out, and who was the boy that Nannie had met with?

She turned from what was outside and looked towards the fireplace. He was still sitting there, but now his head was raised as if he were being attentive to something.

Did he ever look at girls? He was not as foolish as people thought; he had such bright eyes that one

knew he had lots of things to say that one would like to listen to. She was glad that he had seen Owen his first day here; Owen he would be sure to admire.

She had come from the door now and she was near him. Here they were together, and he would expect her to say something to him. What could she say? He went from the fire to look at the books she had in the little alcove.

Then Brighid lighted a candle. She would hold it so that he could see what books were there. She held the lighted candle and he turned around to her.

Francis Gillick saw her in the light of the candle she held out. He saw the bright pile of her hair and her pale sapphire eyes, and above all he saw her look of eagerness and good fellowship. "*Gracias*," he said. And then he smiled at her. "I needn't set up any foreign words against you," he said.

* * * * *

Then Oona was within. She busied herself at once about the fire, mentioning to Francis Gillick that she was going to make the fire clear for the oaten bread that Brighid was to bake. She took down the baking-iron and set it up before the fire.

As Oona scrubbed well, Brighid baked well and milked well. She brought the oaten bread to the fire and she stood to watch it harden before the toasting fire. Her mother came from the upper room; then Owen came out and closed the room door.

Honor Paralon, it was evident, had aimed at making her best appearance before Considine Gilroy's kinsman. She had put on a brightly coloured crochet shawl, and her hair that still had a dark gloss was in a glinting net. As a young girl Honor had renown, for a peasant poet had sung about her beauty and her pride. When she was nearly thirty she married a man who was past the middle life; her husband died leaving two children with four years between them. Hardly any trace of her husband's, of Bartley Moynagh's, individuality remained in the house or amongst the neighbours: He had only been a sojourner in the place where he had found a wife.

And Honor had set a certain exclusiveness about her two daughters. She had notions about well-reared children; she was always talking about the child or the girl who did or did not show their rearing. The beginning and end of her notions was that the children of her household should know other peoples' rearing as little as possible. And besides exclusiveness she taught her children manners and a genteel fashion of speech.

Francis Gillick went out with Owen to look at his horse and at the cows that were in the byre. Then there was supper. The working-guest was silent at the meal; he was used to eating alone—that was evident.

The settle-bed had been made ready while the men were outside. And now, after Honor had talked to her working-guest about the Gilroys, and after Owen had told about the towns he had been in lately, the last of the oaten bread was put before

the fire by Brighid, and they all knelt down to recite the rosary.

At the end there was a string of prayers; they were for a special intention—for Owen's. Brighid prayed with fervour for her uncle's guidance and success.

And then her mother took the candle and went into the lower room, leaving the men with the light of the fire for the short time they would be up. The oaten bread was baked now. Brighid wrapped it in a cloth and left it on the dresser.

* * * * *

Where the girls and their mother were was a room the walls of which had a wash of blue; there was a heavy wardrobe near the door, and there was a shrine with a plaster image of the Blessed Virgin near it. The big bed was boarded at the back and sides and built over on the top, and it had a crochet quilt for covering. This was where Brighid and Oona slept. Mice would run across the top, and mysterious insects ticked in the boarding—one could hear "the death watch" when one lay ill or dreamy in this bed. Their mother's was pulled out of a press; it was covered with a patch-work quilt with red and black squares upon it.

Later on Brighid came out of this lower room. Owen had gone into the upper room and the working-guest was lying in the settle-bed. She stooped quietly to rake the fire, covering the lighted coals with deep ashes. Then she went back, undressed without a light, and Oona made place for her.

Oona began to whisper to her sister : It was about Francis Gillick, and how he was not what the people thought he was, one like Paddy Sharkey, running the roads with his tongue out ; he was not that way at all. Her sister bade her hush as she turned her eyes to the closed door.

She dreamt that she met Francis Gillick walking the road at night with Nannie Gilroy. She thought she had to say to him, "You're welcome to this place," but instead she said, "You had no right to come." She wakened, and for a while she listened to the crickets chirruping around the hearth in the room above.

CHAPTER II

THE WORKING-GUEST

IN THREE or four days they came to know in Honor Paralon's household that there was nothing dangerous or particularly discreditable in Francis Gillick's derangement. Honor's mind was uneasy for about a week: she hushed visitors with a significant look when they came to topics that she thought might be exciting to the working-guest; she stood at the doorway and watched him while he was working near the house. They found that Francis Gillick was a good workman; moreover, he began to show himself a very companionable person.

He often held visitors with his talk of a hare or a hound, with his descriptions of the habit of the snipe or the bittern. He was fond of weapons; he cleansed a rook-gun that Owen had, and he used to sit with it across his knees. Once he showed Brighid a gleaming knife; he kept it in a leathern case at his belt.

It was Oona who took him to mass the first Sunday he was there; she was eager to be the one to bring him his dinner the two days he was away from the house. They got on well together, this youth with the cloud over him and the good-hearted, excitable child. Between Brighid and Francis Gillick there was more reserve: he looked at the books she

had, and he talked to her about them. He heard her talk of an incident she had read in Doctor Goldsmith's History of Rome, and he suddenly remarked that he would teach her Latin if she could get the books. Brighid took the trouble to go to Brian Magarry, whose son had been made a priest, and borrow a first Latin book. She showed it to Francis Gillick, and that night he began to teach her Latin declensions. She got through the first pages. But she had not the equipment that would help her to learn a language. What she learned was a respect for her mother's working-guest: what remained of her sense of painful oddity was dissipated as she sat opposite him and knew the decision in his voice and look. One can hardly attribute foolishness to the person who is teaching one: Brighid began to see Francis Gillick, not as the youth who had been astray in his mind, but as a man who had mastered strange tongues and had undergone the discipline of unknown studies.

Owen Paralon was at home these evenings. The peddler's pack was off his back—the pack that was to go on it only once again, perhaps. He brought two new books home to Brighid. In the evenings he sat in the upper room with his account books. He had no news as yet from David Moore about the vacant house in Market Street.

There was one evening when Francis Gillick was in especially good spirits. He told Oona that he was going to do something that would be a wonder to them. What would it be? Oona asked. If they were quiet for a while he would show them.

On the brown walls of the kitchen the candle-

light or the flames of the turf made shadows that were very noticeable. When she saw Francis Gillick watching the wall, Oona, who knew all the ways of making play with the shadows, thought he was going to show her how to make other beasts than rabbits and foxes with her hands. He brought out a board that he had fixed. He pinned a paper upon the board, and he made Oona kneel against the wall, her head pressed against the board with its paper. He put a candle on the chair beside. Brighid looked on while he drew with a pencil around Oona's head.

They saw a white paper with the mark of a pencil around the outline of the head. Then Francis Gillick took up the big scissors and cut out a pattern. A white and colorless Oona! Then he turned the other side of the paper. There was Oona's head in black firmness—her hair wild, her mouth open and all! Oona marvelled and marvelled—it was just her own image, she said, although she had never seen herself side-face. Honor admitted that it was well done and that it should be preserved. And so Oona's silhouette was pinned up. Not in the kitchen, however. Every caller would see it there, and Francis Gillick would be kept busy making silhouettes of Nannie Gilroy and her like. Then the uniqueness of the production would be destroyed. Oona's silhouette was pinned on the wardrobe in the lower room, where Oona could see it from her bed in the morning.

Brighid was ready to sit to him, or rather to kneel to him. She smoothed her hair first and bound it, and then she knelt down submissively, leaning her head against the board he had set up. His hands

went around her head. This way and that way he fixed it as she knelt with drooped eyelids. He knelt too as he made the outline.

The scissors went around the outline, and the black face of the paper was turned. There was Brigid! Her face was lifted, her lips were parted; she looked as a girl might look singing in the fields in the morning! Francis Gillick pinned the silhouette on the wall, and Brigid stood back to watch it and to watch him watching it. Honor decided it should be left for Owen to view. Owen admired it greatly; he brought it into his own room and fixed it there. Brigid's silhouette remained fixed just below the branch of withered yew that Owen had taken for palm last Palm Sunday.

That day he had been in the town of Cahirmoy; he had brought back from it something that he had spoken to no one in the house about. He had been noted too in the town, but this he was not aware of. Going into that town you passed a few stained and battered cabins and came suddenly on a street that looked as if it was mounting somewhere. But it exhausted itself after a dozen houses and ended in a few cabins that were stained and battered like the ones you passed on entering. You discovered that the town was not in the street that went mounting up—it was in a street that fell down from the right, a street made wide for the movement of cattle, and with a strongly-built market-house in the middle of it, a market-house that had a dishevelled yard before it with a market-crane that stood up like a gallows. This street ran out to the green hilliness that was all around. Off the first street a road branched to the

left: walls that were covered with thick ivy went each side of this road, and it mounted up to where there was the court of petty sessions, the big Sessions Inn, a church, a very old graveyard, a school and a police barrack.

Opposite the market-house in the lower street was a stunted shop that was breaking out into all kinds of unhealthy growths—porter in barrels, leather, skins—the skins of kids were hanging at the door, dried, and looking like the remnants of creatures that gamekeepers nail to trees. “Mark Bohoon” was the name that was written across this shop.

And at the other side of the market-house was the forge. On this day, besides the blacksmith, there were four men in it—John Boyle, Daniel Maher, Kiernan Mulcahy, and a young man who had recently come into Cahirmoy, a Luke Leonard. From the forge they could see the whole of the Market Street.

“Them boys are having a rale set-to,” said John Cummins the smith, refering to two men who were before the shop at the other side of the street.

The abandonment with which they conducted their conversation made them an unconventional pair. One was Jonathan Woulfe, Judkin de Courcey’s steward, and the other was the owner of the shop, Mark Bohoon. Jonathan Woulfe was a hunchback, a man of sixty, vigorous and sanguine. He was shabbily dressed; he wore an overcoat although it was the evening of a bright day, and a well-worn silk hat crowned his attire. He held a stick, or rather a staff, in his hand, and his great head with its full beard was flung back on the hump

between his shoulders. The shopkeeper swaggered, asserting this, dismissing that. Both men were intoxicated, and drink had made them quarrelsome. Jonathan Woulfe was beating the ground with his staff, and Mark Bohoon was making gestures in his face—gestures that one knew accompanied words that were turbulent and insolent.

"Jonathan Woulfe can't pass Bohoon's shop," said the smith, "and I hear that Bohoon hammers him when he hasn't the money to pay for his liquor."

"The devil hammer both of them," said John Boyle gently, "one of them is a landlord's convenience, and the other is. . . . Did you ever hear what King Solomon said about a publican?"

"Tell us."

"King Solomon said that a publican should have the tail of a dog and the mouth of a duck."

"Do you know who he is—the young man who is walking up the other side of the street?"

It was Francis Gillick who was the object of the inquiry: the maker of it was a young man who was newly come to Cahirmoy, Luke Leonard was his name.

Something of the attentive look of the blind was in this young man's face, and occasionally a note that meant a meditative thought came into his voice. He was young—a little more than a stripling, and he might have been a student—a young theologue.

"He's a boy by the name of Francis Gillick," said John Cummins, the blacksmith.

"Aye, I thought I knew him," said the young man. "Aye, Francis Gillick, 'tis he indeed. So he's here now?"

"With Honor Paralon for a season or two," said the blacksmith.

The young man bent forward on the bench and peered at Honor Paralon's working-guest.

Francis Gillick came along, brow wrinkled, but lips smiling. He stopped at an old woman's stall to take up a wrinkled apple. Then he remembered something; he bought two round biscuits with crumbs of sugar upon them; these were for Oona. He glanced around, saw two flying wagtails chase each other, and was eager and unharassed. He thought of something he might do to give entertainment to Brigid and Oona in the house to-night.

He went to turn the corner that should bring him on the road for home. Then immediately he became involved in the altercation between the two outside the shop. A hand was laid on his arm and he was pulled up. Bohoon held him. "I'll ask this young man," he asserted. "Now, sir, we'll leave it to you. Give us your fair and candid opinion."

The flaming aggression in the man's face confused Francis Gillick; he knew it was aggression against the weak and that it might fall back into the most abject cowardice. Bohoon's voice in this crisis was the voice of a scolding woman.

"I dispute your right, Mr. Bohoon," Jonathan Woulfe said firmly, "I dispute your right to appeal in this argument to a person in a village street. I dispute your right, sir. I am an M. A. of Trinity College, and the books I possess can show which of us is in the right."

"Allow me, Mr. Jonathan Woulfe, allow me. As ignorant as we are we have our rights. Now I

want to ask—why it's Honor Paralon's young man." He grasped Francis Gillick's hand. "How do you do, sir? I hope I see you well, sir. You are an educated man, and you can throw light upon this point. Was Marshal MacMahon in the Austrian Army once, or was he always in the French Army? I say he was in the Austrian Army at one time."

"And I say it is a matter of public knowledge that he was only in the French service." Jonathan Woulfe spoke, avoiding words that Bohoon had used.

"By your leave, Mr. Jonathan Woulfe, by your leave. We'll leave it to this young man. It's known that he is a man of education."

"Marshal MacMahon was only in the French service," said Jonathan Woulfe dogmatically, "was and is in the French service."

"Is—we're saying nothing about is—I don't give a damn where he is now. The question is, sir, was he in the Austrian Army?"

"I'll dispute with you no more, Mr. Bohoon," said Jonathan Woulfe. He stalked away, trailing his staff behind him.

"The bloody fool," shouted Bohoon the moment after Jonathan Woulfe had gone. "The bloody fool! What do you think of that! He's gone off without taking the very thing that I called him for—the thing that I wanted him to take with him to the Castle!"

Francis Gillick would have gone by, but again Bohoon's hand was laid upon him. "Take it to him," said he. "You'll catch on him."

"What do you want me to take to him?" asked Francis Gillick.

"A pigeon that I wanted him to bring back."

"I don't want to do it," said Francis Gillick.

"If he doesn't take it, who will I get to take it to Castle Conquer?"

"To Castle Conquer!" said Francis Gillick.

There were the wagtails flying around; there was the bitten apple in his hand, and here was someone speaking to him about Castle Conquer! His eagerness became excitement.

"I want that owl scarecrow to take it back—a little white pigeon that flew down here. It belongs to Judkin de Courcey's lady. I wanted the bloody fool to take it to her. I called him in and I let him drink over my counter and now he's gone off without paying me and without taking the bird."

"I'll take it to him," said Francis Gillick.

Bohoon came out of the shop with a broken fishing-basket. A bird stirred within it. He put the basket into Francis Gillick's hands. He said:

"One of the purty pigeons from the Castle. My boy caught it, and God knows what trouble I would get into if it was known. I wanted Jonathan Woulfe to take it back these two days, but the blackguard was too drunk to heed what I was telling him. Now, if you make haste you'll catch him with the basket."

Francis Gillick took the basket. He made haste. He came upon Jonathan Woulfe outside the village: the hunchback steward was marching on, his head thrown back. Francis Gillick did not speak to him; he went past. He heard him muttering as he went on, looking straight ahead of him. Francis Gillick

went past, and in the basket that he carried the pigeon that was from Castle Conquer stirred.

He left the basket with the pigeon in the byre. That night he made the silhouettes of Oona and Brighid. The next day would be a holy day, he thought; the women would be at mass and the men would not appear in the fields; he would go to Castle Conquer with the pigeon that had come into his hands; he would see what was to be seen there.

CHAPTER III

CASTLE CONQUER

HALF way between Honor's house and Castle Conquer there was a grassy pathway that, by a long detour, went from the highway to a village that was at the back of the Castle. As Francis Gillick came near it he heard music. Then he saw a man capering while he played on a tin whistle. The man was making music for a little throng of people who had settled themselves on the grass-covered track that was fairly wide where it joined the highway.

They were "Baccachs"—wandering beggars, but wandering beggars who had the reputation of dealing with occult things. He stood near them and noted a sturdy young woman, a dejected man, a blind grandmother, and five children, big and little. They had lighted a fire against a soil-fence. A little girl who was surprisingly like an old woman in her attitude and expression sat minding the fire. The other children danced to the music that the old man with the tin whistle was making.

"Have you any tobacco on you?" said the young man who seemed to be the head of the vagabond clan. Francis Gillick divided his stock of tobacco with him. The blind woman turned her face to them then. Speaking crossly in Irish she demanded a

share in the gratuity. It was given to her, and she put the tobacco in a little black pipe.

The child who was at the fire brought her grandmother a kindling; she smoked, and her smoking was an unsatisfied attempt to get a satisfaction. She went on scolding. The family, it seemed, delayed to bring her to a certain holy well where she would sit for the rest of the day begging from those who came or those who went by.

Francis Gillick was soon aware that the old fellow who played the tin whistle was not one of the Bacchachs. "He's a kind of scullion's servant up at the Castle—that's what the oul' man is," said the dejected man, giving this unasked information in a morose way. A sack that evidently belonged to the old man was left against the ditch; one could see that it held two boxes, one laid on top of the other. Suddenly a cock crew; the sound came from the bag.

"Now my saycret's out—my saycret's out," said the old fellow, laughing. "Now ye know what's in my bag."

"Two cocks, I suppose," said the morose man.

"In troth you're right."

"Cock-fighting at the Castle, I suppose?"

"It might be that—it might be that."

He went on playing with the spittle streaming down his beard. He was a little man with the strengthless frame that showed he had come of a starved stock. The flesh of his face was soft and grey; he had shallow blue eyes and on his forehead was the mark of mendicancy. But as he played for the children he was happy and humourous.

"A clown from a circus he was," said the morose

man with contempt. "Oul' de Courcey has a batch of bullies up at his place and he brought in that lad to keep them in humour. He's some sort of a pot-wolloper at the Castle."

The ex-clown assembled the four children and set them two by two. "Now mind, you're corporal," he said to one of them. He played a tune and set them marching down the road. The little girl from her place at the fire watched their departure with a grown person's amusement.

"Is he going to Conquer Castle?" Francis asked.

"Is he, Biddy?" said the man to the child at the fire.

"He is so," said the youngster.

"I'm going to Conquer Castle," said Francis Gillick, "and I'd like to be with him."

"Go by yourself," said the man, "and don't be minding that lad." Then he added resentfully. "I'd like to see the same Castle myself. And do you know why?"

"I don't," said Francis Gillick.

"Do you see the oul' blind woman yonder? She's my mother. And her name's de Courcey."

Francis looked from one to the other in astonishment. "Yes, de Courcey she is," said her son. "And what's more, she's the rightful de Courcey."

The young woman was listening to what her husband said. She had a heavy, an aboriginal face. Turning to the old woman she said in Irish:

"You son is telling who your people were, old mother."

"And who wants to know about my people?" she muttered, her voice rising. "Tell them that Con-

quer Castle and all that belonged to it were ours. The curse of the living God on them that beggared me and mine. May they be brought low, may they be brought low." She said this with demoniacal vehemence. She was seated on her hunkers with a ragged shawl drawn across her head. Her eyes were sealed up. Francis Gillick saw in her face that sinister look that he had noticed before in the faces of the blind.

"How was her people brought to beggary?" he asked.

"It was a long time ago," said the young man. "There were laws against Catholics holding estates at the time. This woman's people stayed Catholics although they were lords and estated gentlemen. But they left what they held—the Castle and Bloody Meadows and all the land you can see—in the charge of a cousin or an uncle, letting him have the name of owning the estates. Her people trusted this man—do you understand?"

"I understand," said Francis Gillick.

"Well, the uncle or the cousin or whoever he was betrayed them. He took the whole place over, and because he was the King's religion he was able to turn the rightful owners out of it. Isn't that the right of it?" said he, flinging the words at the old woman.

She said nothing. She sat rocking her body, a brooding, bad and bitter look on her face.

"God send that their beggary will be worse than ours," said the young woman.

"Is de Courcey your name?" Francis Gillick asked.

"No," said the man. "It's Jinks—the oul' woman married a man of that name. I'm Hugh Jinks. You think that the name is changed a bit. There's more changed than the name. Me and my woman and the childre aren't Catholics." There was a hard look on the young woman's face. "Only the Protestants were good to us," she said.

"I thought that the old woman went to the Holy Well," said Francis Gillick.

"She does. But that's nothing to us," said her son. To Francis Gillick the change from the state and the station of Conquer Castle to beggary by the wayside was less than this metamorphosis of name and faith. He looked at these people in wonder. "And now we're the same religion as oul' de Courcey, the grandson of the man who took the Castle and all belonging to it," said the young man.

Sylvester Simm was the name of the ex-clown. He came back, the children marching to the music he made. He stood there blowing his whistle and stamping his feet. He had cock's feathers in the band of his tattered hat; he took them out and distributed them amongst the four children. "You're good childre, very good childre. If I had the teachin' of you I'd turn you into rale, proper soldiers. And now I'll give you the last order—Dismiss." The children broke away, and after he had put the tin whistle into the lining of his coat the old fellow lifted the sack on his meagre back.

He said good-bye to the beggar family good-humouredly, but the morose man barely acknowledged his leave-taking.

"Are you for Conquer Castle?" Francis Gillick asked as he went beside him.

"I am, young fellow," said the bearer of the bag, giving Francis Gillick a suspicious look. But then, as they went along the road together, the old fellow became companionable. . . .

The places around kept the memory of an early conquest. Within the walls that closed the de Courcey demesne were the fields called Bloody Meadows where the saffron-tunicked Irish clansmen were slaughtered by men in armour. These were men who, detaching themselves from a larger force, had raided into this part of the country. The Normans built a stronghold near the place of their victory, and a word in a motto or a watchword had given a name to the castle. Those who set up here claimed relationship with the great conquistadore, John de Courcey. Except for an interval in the seventeenth century when the castle had been seized by an Irish soldier the de Courcey name had been powerful here since the first foreign settlement.

"An oul' man," his companion was saying, "certainly as oul' a man as I am, and nothing would do him except take a young lady for his missus. Maybe she'll take a fancy for you, young fellow." He said this with a goatish look. "How could oul' Jookin de Courcey be plazin' to a young lady and all that age upon him? A purty young lady! Sure I'd call her no more than a girl. I'd consider her too young to begin coortin' even. I wonder how he can get her to come up close to him! How would you say it was done, young fellow?"

So the old fellow at his side was trickling out

gossip about a young woman at the castle—Judkin de Courcey's wife! Francis Gillick was reproving. "What about the children you left behind on the road?" he said.

"The childre—aye, God help them, the poor little childre," said the old fellow piously.

But Francis Gillick had hardly heard what the old fellow related, and he was not thinking upon the Baccach children back upon the road. . . . Down that slope had come the young captain with his troop of Irish soldiers when they swept forward and seized the castle of the de Courceys. Down that slope the riders had come. He felt how the company would be ordered, and he saw the riders—one especially in Spanish dress and with Spanish arms; his memoirs, written in Latin, had been left in Salamanca.

And after he had expelled the Norman de Courceys the young chief built a tower here that, in the minds of the people at least, still kept his name—O'Failey's Tower. O'Failey! He cried out the name and it came back to him from the buttressed gate they had now come before—the gate of Castle Conquer.

They went within. The spirit had gone out of Sylvester Simm and he dragged on without a sound out of him. The two went along the driveway, Sylvester Simm with the sack that held the cocks, and Francis Gillick with the broken fishing-basket that had in it the pigeon for the lady of the castle.

Laurels and rare shrubs overgrew the driveway. Beech trees with great boles and splendid branches made a vista. And beside the turret of the gate,

darkening it and darkened by it, there was what seemed to be a double yew tree—two great branches growing from a short stem with foliage that had its green darkened; an ancient tree that must have been there, Francis Gillick thought, when O'Failey brought his clansmen into the Norman's castle.

And some place amongst the trees was the tower that was still called O'Failey's Tower.

He saw a thing moving where he looked—a gleaming neck going amongst the dank nettles, and then another, and another. Peacocks! How strange to see them in this wild place! He watched them as they emerged, following the glint of their necks as they went like turkeys amongst the nettles and tall grasses. Sylvester Simm pointed to the branches of a tree. A great bird was fluttering up the branches—a peahen.

"Are they wild here?" Francis Gillick asked.

"They're wild for as long as any one can remember—a whole flock of them," said the old fellow. "But there's a fox here that knows how to deal with the young ones," he said spitefully.

He went on hearing the cries of the peacocks and seeing here and there the quick, gleaming necks above the wet grasses.

And then they came before the castle. It had another building one side of it, a structure of the eighteenth century, half barrack, half farmhouse. The arch of the doorway stood clear, and there were arrow-slits and narrow window-openings above it, but the castle was roofless, and its emptiness was felt by the one standing before it. A spread of dark ivy, thick, branched, and knotted, was across

the front of the castle. Three jackdaws were on the top of the wall.

So this was Castle Conquer! Francis Gillick, watching it, heard Sylvester Simm speaking to one who was beside the building that flanked the castle. "A young man," he was saying, "a young man that brought back one of your purty pigeons—a young country man, my lady."

This was the wife of Judkin de Courcey. She was girlish rather than womanly, it seemed to Francis Gillick, for all that Sylvester Simm was "my lady-ing" her. Then he saw that she had on a yellow shawl. She had great black eyes. Could it really be that he had seen her sometime, somewhere before?

She came to him, and, as she did, he felt obscurely shaken. Somewhere, sometime, he had seen one walk towards him in just that way. "You have brought my pigeon back," she said. And then, "Are you one of Mr. de Courcey's tenants?"

"I am not," he said, "but I work for one of them."

She smiled at him as she drew down the edge of her shawl. He saw now that one of her cheeks was seared as if a burning iron had been laid on it.

Sylvester Simm shuffled into the yard of the building. He laid the basket down as she came to him. Then she said:

"Are you married?"

"No," said Francis Gillick.

"You have a sweetheart, haven't you?" she persisted.

"I was going to be a priest."

He did not know why he made this confidence.

He knew that there was mockery in his voice and that a leer formed itself on his lips as he said it.

"*Ma foi*," said the lady, and she stuck her tongue out.

A drift of music with the bells of the dancer's mandolines came back to him. This was she, just the same as he had seen her, with ear-rings drooping down on her shoulders.

"I think I should like you," she said.

And then suddenly she said, "Here is my husband, Mr. de Courcey. He will think you are one of my relations and be rude to you." She went down some steps and into the lower part of the castle. Francis Gillick turned around and faced a man who was coming into the yard by the postern.

Judkin de Courcey was really an old man—he was between seventy and eighty. He was once a big man, over six feet in height and so massively made that he could overthrow any of the countrymen in a wrestling bout. As he came on now he was making angry motions with his stick and his mouth was shaking with fury. He had on the clothes of a peasant, and his shirt was open showing his chest. The expression which is somehow vile in the faces of old men—discontent—was on his features. And the discontent which remained on the lower part of his face made his rage the more ugly.

He had difficulty with his speech. "Out—out—out," he mouthed.

Something had been shaken in Francis Gillick. Now the sight of this old man made rage mount up in him.

"Out—out—out!" And as he came nearer Judkin de Courcey raised the stick that he carried.

"Stop, Judkin de Courcey! Would the best of your blood raise a hand to me?"

Judkin de Courcey stood there, his face shaking. And before him, aroused by an obscure jealousy, aroused by a racial enmity, stood the young man, Francis Gillick.

"Out—out—out."

Francis Gillick took hold of the stick, and the two stood facing each other. One was angry, stupid, inarticulate. Made furious by the harsh domination he saw in that one's face, Francis Gillick wrenched the stick out of his hands.

The woman had gone in through the arched doorway of the castle. Still the men stood facing each other. And still the old man mouthed at and scowled at Francis Gillick.

He heard the gravel scrunching behind. He looked around and he saw a servitor of the castle. A man with a bushy beard and yellow protruding teeth—a dog of a man—was upon him. He had a gun in his hands. He shifted the gun as he came close.

"Why am I striving with you anyway, Judkin de Courcey?" He threw down the stick on the ground.

"Out—out—out."

"Will I let him go, your honour?"

He did not hear the words that Judkin de Courcey spoke. He went past the servitor and down the driveway towards the gate of Castle Conquer.

But there was something to do before he left the grounds of the castle. He saw through the trees

the walls of O'Failey's Tower. He went towards the tower. As he came near a heron that had been resting on the top rose up and went drifting across the trees.

Then Francis Gillick went up and laid his hands upon the stones of the tower that O'Failey had built during the brief reconquest of these lands.

* * * * *

Irish genealogists know of the Clann O'Failey. They were descended from an adventurous brother of a High King, and for centuries they were lords in this part of Ireland. At the time of the Norman invasion they must have been but a small sept: at all events the Clann was almost destroyed at the time of the first raidings. The de Courceys built a stronghold upon the O'Failey place of assembly, and they dominated the country that the O'Faileys once held.

For some hundreds of years afterwards the faithful genealogists kept the O'Failey name in their records. But it was no longer in local history. And then, in the seventeenth century, the name came back again.

A young soldier who had been trained in Spain, Angus O'Failey, came to Ireland in the company of Owen Roe O'Neill. He made a camp in the country of his Clann, and he raised and equipped a body of men. The de Courcey of the day took the side of the English Parliamentarians. Angus O'Failey seized Castle Conquer and expelled the de Courceys

from the district. And near the de Courcey castle he raised the tower that still bore his name.

But Owen Roe died upon Saint Leonard's Day, and Angus O'Failey, who was afterwards in Clonmel with young Hugh O'Neill, did not come back. Later on the English King gave the lands and castle back to de Courcey.

The O'Failey name became obscure again. Genealogists still followed it, for Angus had married while in the district and had left a child there. In the third generation after Angus the name Ulick or Ulysses came into the family. The children took the name MacUlick. They were known as being of the O'Failey stock as long as there were genealogists left to keep record of the families of the district. Like many others whom the historian laments, "they melted into the peasantry." When English came to be the familiar language they were no longer MacUlick but Gillick. Francis Gillick had read the memoirs of Angus O'Failey in the college in Salamanca, and by the comment of an eighteenth century scribe he knew that his descent was from this Angus.

* * * * *

The tower was square, strong and grey. In the window-openings yellow-flowering weeds grew, and on the top wall a young ash-tree flourished. Francis Gillick went within. He seated himself on the broken stairway and he began to think on what had befallen him—he thought of the strange young woman who was Judkin de Courcey's wife and of

the momentary mastery she had over him; he thought of the violent old man who had raised a stick over him; he thought of the beggar-woman on the road who was of the breed of the de Courceys. And he—he who was the one who bore a name that poets had put into songs of liberation—had come like a pursued poacher into this tower that his forefather had builded. The tower that Angus O'Failey had built in his triumph was so forgotten that its overthrow was left to the winds and the rains, and the soil above which he sat now was trampled by the feet of de Courcey's cattle.

"Francis Gillick! Come higher up, Francis Gillick!"

In great surprise Francis Gillick looked up. In the embrasure of a window above a man was seated. He went up the steps and came face with the one who had named him.

He was no stranger to him, this young man. Francis Gillick knew the face—the pale face of a young theological student, with a bony forehead and peering eyes. "How are you, Francis Gillick?" said the young man.

"It's Luke Leonard! How did you come here?"

"I was in Cahirmoy and I saw you there yesterday. I saw you on the road today and I came into the castle grounds after you. I climbed this tower to have a look around me."

He was searching Francis Gillick's face. "Do you know the men of this part of the country?" he asked.

"No," said Francis Gillick, "I don't know anyone yet."

"I've been round here trying to get them to join a little association."

"What kind of an association?"

"You've heard of it, no doubt. I mean the Clann Melidh."

"How did they meet you about it?"

"Oh, fair, fair. I was with the men in the forge—John Cummins, Daniel Maher, John Boyle, and another, perhaps the best of them, a young man back from America, Kiernan Mulcahy by name."

Again he looked at Francis Gillick thoughtfully. Francis Gillick listened and looked with excitement. Once they had been under attack together. He knew what generalship, what striking power went with this seminarian's deliberation.

"What more?" asked Francis Gillick.

"They're good men as far as they'll go. But they say that the grey coats will never fight for a republic. Agrarian combination is as far as the men round here will go, they tell me. What about joining yourself?"

The Clann Melidh had only been a name to him. But now he was with them. He saw preparation; men arming; he saw secret camps of men. To free Ireland! To take the power from de Courcey and his like! To give one a chance of being a soldier of the re-conquest!

"I'll join," he said.

"It's this way," said Luke Leonard. "I'm one of the 'A's.' You might say that I'm a Colonel. I want to swear in nine 'B's' or Captains. Each of the 'B's' will have to swear in nine 'C's' or Sergeants.

And each of the 'C's is required to swear in nine 'D's and they go to make the rank and file."

"Is that it?" asked Francis Gillick.

"You're the only 'B' I'm likely to get here. You'll get to know likely men. Swear in nine 'C's.' The men you'll swear in will be the only members of the association that will be known to you. You'll drill and instruct them."

"I don't know the people here yet," said Francis Gillick. "But I'll get the nine 'C's.'"

"No doubt you will. Pick one here and there, now and again. Time and watchfulness will get you the right men."

"Will we have long to prepare?"

"Long enough. We're getting arms now. This might be a good place to store arms—this tower, I mean."

"It might be. It would be a hard place to come to, though. And de Courcey has rangers going through this place."

"It might be easy to come to from the Monamore side, though." Luke Leonard stood up on the tower and looked around. "You must try if it would be easy to come to from that side."

"I'll try," said Francis Gillick.

"I know you'll make a good officer. I'll give you the oath here."

They stood up on the parapet of the tower, and Francis Gillick swore to obey the orders that came from the organization, and to keep secret from every one his orders and his movements. He was ready for the recruitment. The O'Failey who had once

taken the castle and who had built this tower had laid a hand on him.

Not much information was given Francis Gillick by Luke Leonard. He was assured that the organization was becoming stronger and stronger, that it had officers who had been trained in the American War, and that it had an able council. All this Luke Leonard himself believed. Francis Gillick had been out of Ireland, and he did not know that already the organization had passed its great moment and that even now it was crumbling at the top.

As he stood on the tower's top he saw into the farm-yard that was one side of the castle. He saw two old men in the farm-yard—Sylvester Simm and Judkin de Courcey. The fighting cocks were on the ground, and the two old men, stooping down, were looking at them. Old men at an old game! And Castle Conquer unmanned! It could not stand against the resurgency that he felt in himself and that he thought was shared in the secret camps of men. Elation grew in him as he turned from looking at the pair and followed Luke Leonard down the steps of the tower.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNLIGHTED ROOM

THAT evening, on his way back from Castle Conquer, Francis Gillick came upon Brighid. Honor's two daughters were in Gilroy's; hearing music he came into the house, and saw there Oona first and Brighid afterwards.

He stood with a pack of boys at the end of the kitchen, and for a while he was not noticed. Brighid was prevailed upon to sing. She had a fine voice, and she was better instructed than were the run of the country singers; Francis Gillick had heard her sing before, but only in snatches.

Now she sang as for some effect; her voice, full and deep, rose and fell thrillingly. She sang a street song: there was a lament in the last lines of it, but before her voice sank to the lament, she had put one scene before all who listened to her—

My sister Mary heard the express;
She came downstairs in her morning dress:
Five hundred guineas she would lay down
To see me liberated in Wexford town.

Then she sang "An Cailin deas cruidhte na m-bo."
"The pretty girl of the milking of the cows." She did not know the meaning of the Irish words; she

sang it as she had often heard her grandmother sing it, rocking Oona's cradle. The melody flowed on and on, turning back on itself, becoming a crooning. As Francis Gillick listened the memory of his exile from Ireland came back to him, for the green valleys and the bright pastures were in this song. The "colleen" was milking her cows in a valley-pasture; she answered the stranger with the tale of her content; the blackthorn hedges were in blossom.

As he went home with them, with Brighid and Oona, he told her the meaning of the words in the song; afterwards they sat for a while, and at the fire at home he went over the words in the song. Honor knew some Irish; she had heard it spoken in her mother's lifetime. She sat near, confirming the meanings Francis Gillick gave to the words—the word for fire, for sod of turf, for table, for chest. The next night they went over more words that were half familiar to Brighid. Then she had him write names down in the unfamiliar Irish character. It was exciting to see the names come out in such a way—

Brighid Nic Pharalon
Proinnsias Mac Uilic
Una Nic Pharalon.

She began to think that her mother's working-guest knew most things. And when she looked him over with new interest she saw that no longer was there that look in his face that seemed to say "I know I'm foolish, but I must go on with this," and that there was nothing now that was shrinking or rueful in his gaze.

But Francis Gillick and Luke Leonard were not the only ones for whom this holy day had been an opportunity for the discussion of extra-parish affairs. There was in Cahirmoy an unlighted, cobwebbed room that often saw communications between the attachés of a great power—to wit: David Moore and Hughie Magrane. The room adjoined David Moore's office: Hughie Magrane, the keeper of the Sessions Inn, could hardly be said to enter it; he used to lean across a counter-flap and talk to the solicitor who would sit at a table, pink-cheeked and smiling, drawing on the other's information while he made idle marks on a paper or on the dusty table.

The unlighted, cobwebbed room was a sort of confessional. It was Hughie Magrane who confessed. His recital was about the people of the town and the people who came into the town—what men had been drunk, who had got a new coat, whom the priest had spoken about from the altar, what girl was in trouble, who had got money from America, what young woman the new constable was speaking to. It was gossip, of course, and the two enjoyed it as gossip, but it was gossip that had an economic and political significance. If So-and-So could have two new coats in a year he could pay a better rent to a landlord who was wise enough to frame the proverb, "The higher you load the tighter your horse will draw." Besides it was worth while in a land governed by Coercion Acts to know who locally was disaffected or who was likely to join the disaffected.

But it was entertainment for these two to review

the happenings in Cahirmoy. David Moore, as if in idleness, would pursue a topic this way and that. Sometimes he asked a business-like question. Sometimes he made a note.

And as Hughie Magrane leaned across the flap of the counter in this unlighted room he was defending himself, he was injuring enemies, he was putting into the dock the disaffected, insurrectionary, disloyal, unregenerate folk he was living amongst. Some of the things he told went far. Dublin Castle sometimes heard and harkened.

Considering that his inn was by no means central, considering that it was on the outskirts of the town, it was miraculous all that Hughie Magrane picked up. But then he was that kind of an investigator—a questioner of children, a catechizer of beggars and servants, a born watcher and listener. Now he was telling of Francis Gillick and of another strange young man who had come into the town, a young man by the name of Luke Leonard. He had nothing to retail about him.

“What did they talk about at the Lodge on Thursday?” David Moore asked. He had not been there himself.

“The brethern don’t want Paralon in the house on Market Square,” said Hughie Magrane.

“It’s a hundred and fifty pounds for Sir John,” said David Moore.

“The brethern hold that the town would be better served and Sir John’s own interest would be better served by having a loyal man there. There’s too few loyal men in this town—I wonder that never

comes into the minds of the government and the high-up people."

"A hundred and fifty pounds is a hundred and fifty pounds," said David Moore realistically.

"What good will it be to them if we're all massacred in our beds and the whole government overturned—I'd like to ask them that," said Hughie. "Anyway, the brethern don't like this man Paralon getting in there. If it was a public house they wouldn't mind. But setting up in the way of an industry is a different thing. They oughtn't to be let do it, and you know they oughtn't to be let do it. Them fellows would put their heels on our faces if they had five pounds in their pocket."

David Moore looked down at a document that he had under his hands. It was a circular from the Loyalists' and Property Owners' Association. It said what Hughie Magrane had been saying, but it said it less tersely. No opportunities were to be given to the disloyal. Every place that could be filled with tried loyal men should be filled with such. Otherwise King William had crossed the Boyne in vain.

He had already written to the Association asking if they knew of one who could handle a business in woolens and was prepared to live in a place where there were not many Loyalists. "Can the brethern get two hundred pounds to put up against Paralon's hundred and fifty?" he asked Hughie Magrane.

"The brethern shouldn't be asked to make any levy or contribution," said the inn-keeper. "It's little enough we get out of our loyalty. I say that

the high-up people ought to come to our relief here."

"I'll be at the Lodge next Thursday," said David Moore.

Then Hughie Magrane went on to talk of the politics of the Lodges.

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CHAPTER V

TWO MEETINGS

MAY DAY came: on the evening of it there was to be a dance at the cross-roads beside Judith O'Reilly's, and Brighid and Oona were to go. Then, when little girls were gathering May flowers—prim-roses on the rath, blue-bells in the wood, hawthorn blossoms off the hedges, and fragments of furze everywhere—Honor declared against her daughters' going: she had a fluttering up and down her back, and she knew that the most notable of her diseases was coming on her: both daughters would have to stay at home, one to look after the house, and the other to attend her.

Then came Nannie Gilroy. Nannie wanted Brighid to play the fiddle for the dances. She set her mind on Brighid's going, and partly by persiflage, partly by scolding, she secured her release. And so Oona was the one kept at home this festival evening.

Oona had thought that the romantic day on which one gathered flowers in the fields was bound to have evening hours filled with delight and entertainment. She was to have worn for the first time a pair of new shoes with bright buckles, and she would show the necklace of beads that her uncle Owen had brought to her. Now she would have to stay in a dim house, and there wasn't even the prospect that

a visitor would come in, for everyone would be at the diversions that were going on. Francis Gillick would be away somewhere, too; he had told her so. Others would be having all the fun of the year while she was left behind. She sat on the chest and shed a few tears. Then she went to the door and remained looking out over the fields, an aggrieved and pensive maid. Her mother called to her, and Oona gave attendance in a sad obedience.

Meanwhile Brighid and Nannie Gilroy were going across the fields. The glow of the lengthening day was in the sky: For Nannie it all was leading up to the rendezvous at the cross-roads; for the younger girl there was something more imaginative about it all. Nannie talked about the fellows who would be there, and was confidential and wayward; Brighid laughed with her, but the quietness and the mystery of the long evening held her back from being wayward like her cousin. That mystery came to Nannie for a moment: it was May Day after all, and there were occult things to be considered. "We'll have to get some quiet fellow to walk home with us," Nannie said, "God knows, this is a night when you might meet with the Good People." She put her shawl across her mouth as if to make a disguise that would protect her. Then they left the fields and came out on the road; Nannie was able to laugh again.

When they came to the cross-roads and before Judith O'Reilly's house they saw boys and girls assembled. Paddy Sharkey, the fool, was going from group to group amongst them, talking continuously. Brighid carried her fiddle but there was no call on her to play: a sprinkle of rain came down, and the

girls, fearful for their light dresses, stood under the trees.

Within the house it was "the hour of the cailleach," the time for old women's gossip. The sober-minded folk had gathered around the fire and the notable things that had happened since last May Day were being discussed with some gravity.

Had Brighid looked into the house she would have been surprised to find Francis Gillick there. He had been at the outskirts of the group until an old woman who wore a black shawl across her head made a place for him beside her. She covered her raillery with exquisite courtesy as she "drew him out" on the subject of his travels. The old men laughed softly as she put a fantastic twist upon some account that he gave. The Red Sea, which seemed to all present to be a more wonderful geographical entity than anything in their folk-romances, was now the topic. "Is it true," the dame was asking, "that you met an old grey man upon the bank and that he put you under bonds of death not to tell what you saw when you were crossing the same Red Sea?" "Divil a thing I saw but an old ditch," said Francis Gillick. "And you didn't see ere an oul' woman at all?" asked one of the elders with a nod and a wink. "I did," said Francis Gillick, "and she put me under bonds of danger and death not to be matching lies with the old women of Ireland." His repartee was not brilliant, but such as it was, it was appreciated. The old woman took the snuff-box out of her bodice and handed it around again. "I hope you have nothing to say

against 'my uncle' " she said. 'My uncle' was her snuff-box.

A little boy belonging to the house brought out a sword in a case—a sword such as a cavalry-man might use and which had been used by the father of someone there—a Sheridan who had followed Phil Sheridan in the American Civil War. Francis Gillick took the sword and examined it in a professional way. They watched him as if they expected him to do some feat with the weapon. The boy noticed his set face and his dancing eyes as he made some cuts with the sword. He handed it back to the lad. "Do you sleep with that sword under your bed?" he asked.

"No," said the lad in wonder. .

"If you do, you'll be a gallant soldier and fight for your country."

"But I'm going to America," said the lad with some regret.

After a while Brighid Moynagh had to say to herself, "They don't ask me into their dance, and they don't ask me into their company." She sat apart aggrieved and discontented. The fiddle she had brought still stayed in its covering; a harmless-looking young man, taking a flute out of his pocket, had begun to play, and the dance went on to the music he made.

For a bride ye have come! Is it with a full score
Of rake-hell rascallions you'd fill up my door,
With a drum to your tail and a fiddle before,
And a bag-piper playing all through ye?

recited a fellow, repeating a verse to the rhythm of the music they danced to.

"Do you like my song, acushla?" said he to Brighid.

"Middling well."

"I made it myself—composed it, if you understand me, and that's the reason I'm so proud of it."

He was a satirical-looking young man with a drooping eyelid; he carried in his hand a stick that was a wand of office. He was called "The Grandee," and he made himself master of ceremonies at the dance.

My faith! Do ye think that a shy little maid
Would lift up her head before such a brigade,
When an arm round her waist would make her
afraid?

By my hand! She has gone from my keeping!

"Your mother will say it for you, alanna, when they call for you," said "The Grandee."

Nannie Gilroy stayed by the young fellow who played the flute, her hand on his shoulder. Everyone else was in the dance. "The Grandee" waved his wand. Boys and girls in the lines opposite each other joined together, swung and were swung, passed their partners along the line, came together, and with arms around each other danced in the ring.

Through the gap in the meadows away she has run;
Like the partridge, across the wide stubble she's
gone,

And here I am, here I am, here I'm alone
With no daughter to give any comer!

Well, here she is back! I declare she has come
Like the cat to the cradle, and Nance she's at home :
O my love, would you go to the bleak hills of Crome,
Where no manners nor mirth are in fashion?

O say not you'll go! That you'll never embark
From a plentiful house where you prize every spark,
Where there's milk in the crocks and meal in the ark,
And a pair of fat ducks for the roasting!

Oh, mother sell all that you have to your name,
To give me a dowry to equal my fame,
Sell the cow, and the sow, and the gander that's
lame,
And the sack of black wool in the corner!

And my good-will I'll leave to our Babe who stays
here,
May she leave the bog-bottoms within the half year,
Where the rushes are high, and the curlews call near,
And the crows on the hills they are lonely!

With rake-hell young fellows my Babe will not go,
Nor look from her dormer upon them below,
With a drum to their tail and a fiddle also,
And a bag-piper playing all through them!

"Heoch, heoch," shouted the dancers, as the dance
ended.

"The Grandee" assembled them, and the dance
began again. Brigid was not asked to play, nor
was she asked into this dance either. She was be-
ginning to be vexed that she had come amongst the
unmannerly people of Cool-lismoy.

Opposite her, under a lime tree, another unat-

tached girl stood. Brighid watched her, made friendly to her because of her aloofness and her good looks. This girl had real beauty—so real, that her appearance made the other girls seem coarse of figure, blunt of feature, and plebeian of expression. She was tall and lightly made, and her fine, black, abundant hair made a proper setting for her face—an ivory-colored face with regular features. It was her eyes that made her face beautiful—luminous eyes that were really violet but that often seemed dark. She had every point of beauty, Brighid knew, even to the dimple that showed when she laughed.

Her name was Ellen Driscoll. Someone to compliment her had named her "Ellen Baun," "Fair Ellen"; now she was known by the descriptive name, "Baun" Driscoll. But although she had a name that was a compliment to her good looks this girl was not greatly sought after by the young men; indeed it was likely that the girls better understood that she was a notable person. She was not vain nor conceited nor in any way proud; she was always agreeable, and put herself in no way above the other girls.

Brighid, made critical by her alienation from the others, watched the girl under the lime tree, but with admiration. She didn't have the word, but she knew that Baun Driscoll's appearance was fastidious. It was an instinct—an instinct that went with her beauty—that made her keep her hands white, her hair fine, while she managed to get clothes that suited her looks and figure. Brighid noticed that her hair made into a cone at the back of her head made the lines of her face beautiful. She did not know that Baun Driscoll, by an enlightenment

that had come to her in some obscure way, had given to her head the lines of a cameo.

Meeting her look a smile came to Baun Driscoll's lips. "How does it come you're without a fellow?" she said. Then the satirical young man came up to the girl under the lime tree and put his arm around her. She sat down on the big stone that was there and he hugged her close to him—Baun Driscoll who looked so disdainful of such advances!

And Nannie did not go into the dance. The young man played on, and her arm was across his shoulder; they were sitting, as the satirical young man remarked, "as tight as tuppence." The dance went on. Physical effort, physical delight was in the dance that was to music that had once been the march-music of warrior-clans. The lack of manners that left her unsought was in their gyrations. So it seemed to Brighid. She came from under the dripping trees and went walking down the road.

As she went on she saw what she took to be a familiar figure leaning across the little bridge. Her uncle Owen! She thought she saw his pack on the coping and that he was leaning over and looking into the stream. And then she stopped, feeling a curious throb, for it might not be him at all. Indeed it was possible that there was no one, that there was nothing there! Was it a fetch of Owen, or was it Owen himself? This was the mystic May evening, and there were things to be seen. She hardly dared move forward. And then she went on, ready to speak his name, and there was no one there at all, or there was only the shadow thrown by a tree! How heart-shaking it was!

It was better to go back. So she turned round and went back, thinking about Owen, suddenly alarmed for Owen! He was away, making his peddler's circuit for the last time. What if something had happened to him? What if something had befallen that would prevent his getting the shop at Cahirmoy?

She went back, and with even more alienation than before she stood and watched the dance.

Paddy Sharkey, the fool, went from one group to another, talking continuously. His big tongue filled up his open mouth, and while he was awake it kept moving. No fool in a mediaeval court could be more conscious of his office or have more regard for his privileges than Paddy Sharkey. He bestowed his presence upon all gatherings in the countryside—dances, wakes, weddings, *mahils*. He was a fool by all appearance. But there was in Paddy's face the patience and the shrewdness of peasant fathers, and while his big tongue rasped on, his eyes held the look of a man standing patiently in a field, or following his herd or flock down some wind-beaten road.

"It's a cow's horn—that's what it is," he was saying, showing the object that he held in his hands.

"And what do you carry it for, Paddy?" said one of the young men.

"It's to bring together in one spot all the men that are sworn in. That's what it's for."

"And so, Paddy, you're preparing for a rising?"

"That's what I'm doing. Sure we're coming into the seventh age now. That's in the prophecies."

So he went from group to group, talking continuously. He was a low-sized man, with one shoulder higher than the other, with a beard growing in an uneven way across his cheeks, and a "glibbe" of hair across his eyes. Francis Gillick had come out of the house, but Brighid had not seen him yet.

Her cousin, Michael Paralon, who had been at Honor's before Francis Gillick came there, challenged him. He got no response, for his successor was looking at the other young man with quick attentiveness.

Now Michael Paralon lifted up his voice in a challenge and a brag.

"I could throw him—him or any other lad that came from the place where he was fed."

"Sure you wouldn't wrestle on the night that's in it," said Francis Gillick.

"And what's particular in the night? It's the night of May Day, isn't it?"

"I thought that everybody knew that this particular May Day is the Feast of Saint Polyanter of Westmeath."

"They're ignorant here," said "The Grandee," whose duties with regard to the dance had come to an end, "They're ignorant here. But don't go away from us for all that. Give us some of your discourse. The girls like to be listening to you, and in this part of the country we have to do a great deal to please the women."

"He has the seven languages," someone said.

"What are the seven languages?" Francis Gillick asked.

"Irish one, English two, Latin three," said a boy.

"Greek," said another.

"Greek. But that makes only four."

"French," said a girl. "I used to hear them talking French all day long when I was in America."

It was then that he and Brighid saw each other. He went to where she was. "Well, Francis," she said, "I declare I'm as glad to see you as if you were the only one in the world that's near me. Stay beside me now." He stayed, and he talked to her with dancing spirits in his eyes. She felt less unsought for now that he was beside her.

She would not play for them now although they came to ask her. The young men began pitching a stone. Michael Paralon challenged him again, and this time he drew Francis Gillick into the ring.

Brighid saw him standing with his coat off and his sleeves rolled up, the big stone lifted above his head. He was smaller than the other young men, but there was movement in him. She thought that he looked like the Champion in the stories that her mother used to tell—the Champion that was always so odd. Francis Gillick threw the stone further than any of the others.

When the match was over "The Grandee" came to talk to Brighid and to thank her for coming. "Wait now, *a laoi geal*,"* he said after a long sentence. "I have more words to say to you. We're glorified by having you here to-night, and it's your fiddle that should have made the music for us, and not that youngster Maelshaughlinn's flute. Sure we know that your mother is the best-bred woman in

* *A laoi geal*, white calf. *A laoi*, calf.

the country, and there isn't a girl here but would like to show as much breeding as yourself. Here's your shawl, *a laoi*, and I hope you'll have nothing to say against us." She got away from his banter at last. Nannie Gilroy was not going with her. In young Maelshaughlinn she had got a boy who had never walked out with a girl before, and she was going to instruct him ("insense him," she would say) in the art of being companionable. She took him across the fields; many couples were going that way now.

Francis Gillick and Brighid went along the causeway that went across the bog. The white mist was thick around them.

"What brought you to the dance, Francis?" Brighid asked.

"I wanted to see what sort of men would be there."

"Well, did you ever in all your travels see worse?" Brighid demanded.

They went on together in silence.

"Tell me, Francis. Is the sea like this?" she asked.

"Something like this when the bog has the mist so thick."

"And the stars! Do you know the stars, Francis?"

"I know some of them."

"They say that they are worlds—like our worlds—isn't that very strange?"

"They are not like our world, Brighid. The stars are made out of incorruptible matter—something that cannot wear away."

"And is our world not made out of—incorruptible matter?"

"I never heard that it was. I read about the stars in Saint Thomas Aquinas."

"I never heard of that saint. Did he live a long time ago, Francis?"

"He did."

So they talked as they crossed the bog, their voices remote like the curlews' calls above them. Francis Gillick lifted his face to the sky. When he turned to her Brighid saw there was perspiration on his forehead.

"You are sweating, Francis."

"Pitching the stone put me into a heat."

"I'll wipe your face." She took the kerchief off her neck and wiped his forehead. When she was so near him she felt she could go with him to the end of the world. "Why do people say things about you, Francis?" she asked.

"That I'm mad? Because, I suppose, I am different from them."

"But what happened to you, Francis?"

"Do you mean in the College in Spain?"

"When you left off being a priest?"

"I'll tell you, Brighid. Every day I was there I was in misery. Then from one day I no more understood what they were saying to me than if they were speaking gibberish. The only thing I took any notice of was a cow or a horse or a goat. There was an old grey horse in the field, and I had to go out at night to speak to it."

"To speak to a horse, do you mean, Francis?"

"I wasn't in my right mind, I suppose. But

haven't you seen them that would talk to a hound?"

"You were lonesome, I think."

"I thought it was the horse that was lonesome. If they had left the horse in the field I would have stayed. But they took the horse away. Then I ran out of the place."

"That was a wild thing to do."

"I was wild. I went on till I came to a blacksmith's forge with men standing outside it holding horses, the same as in Ireland. I went in and I told the smith I could help him. He let me stay. Then I went away with a party of men that came to have their horses shod. One of them quarrelled with me about a knife I had. He stabbed me, and they went off, leaving me senseless on the road. People found me; they knew I was an Irishman and they brought me back to the College. They wrote to a relation I had in Spain. My friends came, and they found me working in the garden (for that's all they would let me do). They brought me away when they saw I was likely to be no credit to them there. They were going to send me to a College at home, but I joined a ship in London and got away from them."

"And did you not want to be a priest at all?"

"I didn't."

"And so that's all that happened to you. I don't think you were even wild."

"What happened to me was for the best. It's a wonder they can't see that, for I had no call to be a priest at all."

"Isn't it a wonder people don't consider the like of that?" said Brighid.

"Sure, they want all people to be unfortunate, so that they will have a story about them."

"You're right, Francis. That's the way with people. I hope that in our house you'll find nothing unfriendly to you."

"Indeed, Brighid, you're all over-good to me—your mother and your uncle and Oona, and yourself that's the best of all."

She held his arm, and the two went on together talking about the dance, about the ailments of the calf, about the swallows' nests in the byre. And she was happy knowing that she would see him tomorrow and every day after. Wasn't it lucky that it was to her mother's house he had come, and not to another house! And then she became interested in a way that was outside herself. Here she was, walking with this young man, and what would happen next, she wondered?

As for Francis Gillick, he had, up to this time, had no interest that a woman might flatter, and hardly a dream that one entered into. Oona, rather than Brighid, had been in his mind; she had been less at a distance from him, she had been more companionable. Since the day at Castle Conquer, though, he had turned to one who had more growth than Oona had. Perhaps he had begun to try to mould Brighid when he sat teaching her Latin declensions.

But now she became a beauty and a power. It had happened to him before that he had just turned around and was in another world. So it was in Salamanca when suddenly it became as impossible for him to be a priest as to be a master-painter. Just

in the same way he came to love Brighid. They had left the bog and had come into a field. The quick changes that came to him imposed some movement on him. He jumped across the ditch and started to run towards the road, hurried as in such moments, into action. He flung himself out on the road and was about to turn back to Brighid when he saw that there was a man standing there waiting for him.

"Is that young woman with you, Francis Gillick?"

"She is. Wait now."

Francis Gillick went back to Brighid, leaving Luke Leonard standing there.

They went through a gap and came out on the road further up. Looking back they both saw the man standing under the moon.

"Do you know that man, Francis?"

"I do. He'll wait till I go back to him."

He had been going to say something to her, Brighid thought, and now he was walking silently beside her. And then before talk could begin, they came in sight of the bridge that at that place went across the little river.

"Oh, Francis, look there," she said, grasping his arm.

"It is your uncle Owen," said Francis.

It was as he had appeared to her at the bridge below where the dance was. His pack was on the coping, and he was standing as if looking into the stream. He did not stir. This time was it really Owen?

So absorbed was he that she was beside him and had spoken his name before he turned to her. And as she went to Owen, Francis Gillick turned back

to where Luke Leonard stood looking at the moon.

"Did anything happen, Owen?" Brigid asked.

He turned to her. His face was not brooding; it was set and angry.

"They refused it to me," he said.

"The shop in the town, Owen?"

"They won't let me have it, even with the fine I have offered to pay."

"Who told you that?"

"Moore. He told it to me to-day. He said there was no use in me thinking about it. I know now there isn't. But one thing I'll tell you—I'm not going to spend my life carrying a pack on my back."

"Indeed, no, uncle; indeed, no, Owen."

He lifted the pack on his shoulders, and he spoke to her in that voice of his that became harsh and harsher with any anger or excitement. "I know where to go," he said. "I can get a shop; it's in a good place, and I'll be away from this place."

He would never stay here now, she knew, and her heart was wild because of this separation—Owen was her foster-brother more than he was her uncle. He went on—

"The money I might have paid for a fine I'll give to your mother. She'll keep it for a fortune for you. I haven't told your mother yet, and I won't tell her for a few days. And Brigid, I won't be so far away but that I'll be able to come back if anything goes wrong with you. That boy, Francis Gillick, will stay, and he will be a good one to help."

He turned as if to go down the road—the road that went back to where the cross-roads dance had been.

"Were you at home to-night, Owen?"

"No. And I won't go in now, Brighid. I have to start from Seven Mile Town in the morning." Without taking her hand he turned and went resolutely down the road.

Brighid waited at the bridge until Francis Gillick came back to her. They walked on, but their walk together was not far enough to let them recover an earlier mood or to bring from either a revelation of what had been disclosed. They were now on the bohereen that went up to the house.

Luke Leonard had had an order for Francis Gillick—he was to start off the next day for a town in which a secret meeting was being held. He was to take whatever orders were given him there. As yet he did not realize what this might mean.

And now they were before the door of the house. Brighid put her hand into Francis Gillick's. And at the same time she raised the latch and opened the door. Oona had made herself busy, and the settle-bed was made ready, and the bread was in the oven. Oona wanted to know what had happened at the dance, and Francis Gillick made a story for her out of his throwing of the stone. Oona questioned him, all agog about his victory.

CHAPTER VI

FRANCIS GILLICK'S DEPARTURE

IN THE morning he told Brighid about his going away: it would be for three or four days, he said. She asked him if the stranger they had met on the road had brought him the word for his going. Francis Gillick told her that he had. They looked at each other in silence. She thought he would say something about his journey; he was going to, but he thought better of it—he had sworn to be secret about his orders and his movements, and it was well to say nothing now.

She wanted to tell him about her uncle's going, and then she thought how odd it would be if she told Francis Gillick and did not tell her mother: she would say nothing, then, for Owen did not want her to tell her mother for the present. So they stood outside the house, Brighid looking at Francis Gillick, and Francis Gillick looking from her to the country around, and they said nothing to each other until Brighid remarked, "You will have to go into the room to tell my mother."

Honor gave him permission to leave. But first he would have to go to the bog and bring back a load of turf for the house. A little boy, Nannie Gilroy's brother, was to be his assistant.

Nannie herself came to the house. She came

early that day, for she wanted to talk about the dance and about the boy she had acquired. She had no censor present, for Honor stayed in bed, not thinking herself recovered. Nannie laughed and whispered a good deal, but at the same time she helped Oona and she helped Brighid. And she had something new to make an excitement about.

Baccachs had come to the place; they had set up a camp in the laneway that went up from the bog-road. Baccachs were wandering beggars. But they were wandering beggars who dealt in occult things. They frequented fairs and markets; they went to holy wells and shrines that pilgrims attended. In the days before Nannie's mother's day they were noted as "keeners, or reciters of elegiac poetry over the dead . . . those who took the name of Baccachs were generally a knavish set: in Leinster they were Munster men, and in Munster, Leinster men, as their altered and well-feigned accent and idiom in either province plainly evinced." This particular tribe of Baccachs, according to Nannie, was made up of a middle-aged man and woman with a string of children and an old blind woman who dealt in spells and charms. As she talked about the Baccachs Brighid remembered having seen them on the road to Castle Conquer.

They had cures that people went to them for—cures for people and for animals. But Nannie's interest in the Baccachs was for reasons of sentiment and romance—they knew of love-charms that could make a pair inseparable, and they could give one a spell that would bring a sweetheart safe back from a journey. Nannie spoke of the Baccachs as

if she had already some communication with them. Oona listened to what she said, ejaculating all the time.

When Francis Gillick came back from the bog Nannie engaged him in conversation and tried to draw out of him the name of the place he was going to. He smiled in his old way, and Brighid, watching him, saw that he looked odd, perplexed, and rueful as before. Dinner was made ready for him and for the boy, and when he had eaten he went to talk with Honor.

When he was outside making preparations for his journey Oona asked Nannie what spell the Baccachs had for bringing a boy safe back from a journey. Nannie knew, or said that she knew, but she left Oona in suspense for a while. Then she told her that if she took three heads of the ceanavaun, the bog-cotton, and threw them against the wind when the boy was going away he would surely come back safely. Three heads of ceanavaun! Three heads of ceanavaun, Nannie repeated, and Oona should go out and see if any ceanavaun came up with the turf.

Oona went outside and looked at the turf that were down beside the rick. She came back again and then Nannie began to entertain herself and the other two by cup-reading. She was in her element as she sat at the head of the kitchen table reading the tea-leaves that remained in the cups. "Sweet talk to you," she read to Oona. Then she saw for her "An invitation and a bright table." "Strange bread" was the next thing she beheld, and then she

saw for her, the afflatus failing, "lots of shake-hands."

After that she had card-drawing. Gathering all the cards together and looking at Brighid she said, "I'm going to make your bed." "My bed!" "Your marriage bed, daughter." Brighid drew near and watched the cards being dealt out.

"A tall, fair man," Nannie announced, "with a position under the crown. You're getting a well-off husband, Bride." Oona and Nannie kept guessing who this prosperous party might be.

And then there came the noise of the horse being taken out of the stable. Oona darted out, and Brighid went more deliberately. Oona scrambled amongst the turf, looking for the heads of ceanavaun.

Francis Gillick took Brighid's hand. "What a wonder of a little hand you have," he said. And then he said, "I'm a poor fellow, but if I had to think of this I could have covered this hand of yours with gold." So he was speaking to her after all! She laughed to hear him and she said, "If you were to have all that gold we'd never have seen you here, and that would be our loss, Francis Gillick." "I'd have seen you, Brighid, don't doubt of it," he said.

Oona found two ceanavaun, heads and stalks. Francis Gillick mounted his queer-looking horse: he wore the blue coat that he had on when he rode up first to the place, and the hat that was fastened under his chin with a strap. As he went off Oona flung the two heads of ceanavaun against the wind and the downy heads came back to her. Brighid called out "Good-bye, good-bye," and Nannie

shouted to him from the doorway that he was to be on his guard against the girls in the place he was going to. The horse went quickly, and he was off.

And then Brigid was left alone, for Nannie went with her brother and Oona stole away with her so that she might have sight of the mysterious Bacchachs. All was quiet in the house, quiet and empty. On the table were strewn the cards that Nannie had told her fortune with.

* * * * *

She went to the "rath" that crowned the hill nearby, and she seated herself behind a clump of close-growing sloe bushes. Owen gone! The house would be lonely indeed. There would be only her mother with her pride and her hypochondria, and there would be Oona. And Francis Gillick! He spoke to her darlingly—more darlingly than any one had ever spoken to her before when he held her hand before he mounted the horse. For all their mockery of him there was no one in the countryside his like—so knowledgable, so tried! What he said to her then was to be thought on! But he would leave them—at the end of the season, likely, and then some other young man would take his place—one who would want to marry herself or Oona. But she could go away, maybe. Maybe her uncle Owen would take her to live with him. In some town by the sea. And maybe one day she would meet a young man like Francis Gillick, like him, but quite settled in his mind.

She saw Oona going back to the house. How

wild Oona was, going to look at the Baccachs and always being led by what Nannie Gilroy told her! Everything about Oona was good, but she had only the wit of a child, and companionship with Nannie Gilroy wasn't making her more settled. That would be another loss through Owen's going—there would be no one to keep Oona at school and learning!

* * * * *

When she went into the house her mother was out of bed and in the kitchen. She had had a dream. And this dream had made such an impression upon her that she was awakened into full activity. She had been telling the dream to Oona, and now she repeated it for Brighid.

She dreamt that the wind had blown down the ivy at the gable-end of the house. Such a dream portended a change in the household—a change of fortune. Affluence would come to them, and, of course, it would be through Owen it would come.

With that affluence Honor Paralon would have the chance of rounding-off her domain, for she would be able to acquire the field that so neatly adjoined one of her own—Martin Jordan's field. It wouldn't do to let the Gilroys get possession of a place that was so much a part of their own. And the Gilroys, she knew, were waiting until James had made money in the shop he had—then they would take over Martin Jordan's field.

Brighid remarked that Martin Jordan would hold his own field as long as he held his own life. Jonathan Woulfe, Honor returned, would have a word

to say about that. Martin Jordan was deep in arrears, and May Day had come and gone and he hadn't been in the rent-office. There was no chance of his making up on the arrears now. And someone in her house would be ready to take over the field that really was part of their land. They would be ready to do that before the Gilroys were ready.

Honor had got out of bed with a great deal of expectancy. Her expectancy was turning to satisfaction. In her satisfaction she did something which she rarely let her daughters see her do—she drew out a little pipe that was hidden behind a loose brick in the chimney wall, and she smoked.

Later Brighid saw her mother in the lower room. She was sleeping, the red and black patch of the quilt drawn up to her chin. She breathed agitatedly, and seemed restless even in her sleep. Her nose was dominating, and the hand that was at her head seemed to be raised in an order. The ambitions and enterprises that were in her mother's mind came with an alienness before Brighid. She went up to the living-room, and she and Oona sat each side of the fire, silent and waiting.

So the late night came on. Oona spoke of his riding along the roads in the night, and then Brighid found that her mind had turned from her uncle, and that for a long while she had been thinking of Francis Gillick.

CHAPTER VII

OWEN PARALON

IT WAS years since he had been in Michael Philabeen's, the house that had fostered him when he was a child of between six and eight. It held the thing that was most conspicuous in his recollection of his childhood years—a loom; the first loom he had ever looked on.

Often he had passed nearby, without any desire of going in, knowing himself too changed to have any intimacy with Michael Philabeen, the weaver. But now he turned up to the little house and went in. Michael sat at his old place before the loom, barefooted as if he had been working it, but Owen Paralon knew that it was many a day since Michael had drawn a thread through it. The weaver looked at him and did not know him; Maurya, Michael's wife, silent as ever, knew Owen Paralon, the peddler, and welcomed him. She dusted a seat for him and asked him to rest himself.

Maurya's spinning was the only work that was done in the house, Owen knew. He opened his pack and brought out a bright kerchief for her; she instantly pinned it across her bodice and old Michael nodded his head and smiled to see her get a present that pleased her so well.

It was long since he had seen them, and now it

came into Owen Paralon's mind that he would not see them again—he would be off the roads, and that house on the bye-roads would never be visited by him again. He took out some of the other articles he had in the pack—a little mirror, a pin-cushion, and, best of all, a little music-box, and left them before the pair. He showed Maurya how to get a tune out of the box; she listened unmoved while the tune played itself, but the weaver showed his delight in the presents, and above all, in the music-box. As the thin tune repeated itself some recollection came to him, and he turned around from the loom and began to speak to Owen Paralon. There were incoherencies in what he said, but in a while he was recalling clearly a journey that he and his listener had been upon in the days of Michael's young manhood and Owen's childhood.

“I found my mother's people different from the people in my father's place,” he said. “They were fond of hunting, and sporting, and music, and stories. My uncle taught me to play the flute, and I soon could play it well enough. In two years my mother went back to my father's home, and I went with her. Then my father put me to the loom, and began to teach me the trade he had got from his father and from the fathers before him. I worked in the house at the loom, but I often longed for my uncle's house, for the music at night, the fun and the story-telling. I stole away when I was a lad, big enough to know better, and I went into the County Cavan. I became a strolling musician, playing along the roads on the flute, the one instrument I had power over. I used to play at cross-road

dances, and in the house where there would be a wedding or something of that kind; but I was happiest when there was no gathering about me, when I would sit on a grassy ditch and play to myself. But of course I wouldn't be left to that life. My father sent for me again and again, but I refused to go back to the loom. My uncle came and advised me to go back to the shelter and the good trade. Then my mother came, and I craved her to let me go my own way. She told me that my father was getting old and wanted to see his son at the loom. I was heart-broken; I refused to go back. I kept to the roads, though I know I was not a rambler out and out, and I often used to think of the kindness of the settled life. I had put my father aside and I would not listen to my mother, and maybe what fell on me was a judgment from God. Some sickness came on me, and my teeth dropped away, and so I lost power over the flute, the one instrument I could play.

"I went back to my father's country; he settled me down at the loom, and I kept to the business very steadily. My father had one trouble on his mind, and that was to find a wife for me, a woman that would keep me at the loom when he would be gone. Well, he made a match for me after my mother died, and the match with Maurya turned out well enough. Then the Paralons had sickness and trouble, and they sent the child Owen to my father's house. The child stayed until after my father died, when the loom and the house was left to me and my wife.

"I used to work at my weaving, sitting in the house the whole of the day. I kept from the roads,

and I would not let my mind be on the music. If anyone around would ask me for a tune, I would shake my head. Sometimes, if I was in a house where music was getting played, I'd feel the heart within me become twisted, and I would have to get up and go out of the house. And there would be no sport or company in my own house. My wife had no care for these things; indeed, she only wanted to keep her hands busy. And now I'll tell you something about my woman: her people were very respectable, but they met with misfortune, and they were evicted from their own holding. My wife herself had to live with strangers who were grudging to her. Now, that was always on her mind, and she made it her devotion to make a good place for ourselves—a house that she could show to the friends who came to see her. And so she was always working, and our little house and garden was not enough for the spirit that was in her. She worked abroad, spinning in this house, sewing in that, weeding in this man's garden. And all the time I would be sitting at the loom, thinking things over, and talking to Owen, the child who was beginning to give a sort of heed to me. I talked so much about the County Cavan where I had lived with my uncle that the child knew the place as well as I did myself. Owen had no friends here, for there were no children around, and me and him were all and all with each other. Well, one year I began to take him about the country while my woman was abroad working. I would take him to the top of the hill or the shore of the lake. I began to find eyes for birds' nests, and no matter how thick the hedge was I could show

Owen the hedge-sparrow's nest, and I could find him the lark's nest on the ground. I was beginning to feel that it would be such a desperate thing to go into the County Cavan and stay there for a while, for my woman was in no way depending upon me. July came, and long before daybreak I'd find myself awake, and Owen would be awake too. Then the child would talk to me about the County Cavan, and I promised him I would go before the weaving commenced, and take him with me.

"Soon after that my woman began to bring in the stuff for the weaving, and I had to put the first threads on the loom. That day Owen brought in the nest of a blackbird, and my heart was nearly broken when he left it down before me. I felt that the good of my life was going while I was putting in the threads. I talked to Owen, and in the end I told him that we would start on the journey next day. Then my wife came in; she had more stuff for the weaving, and she began to take the little pictures down from the wall, for she wanted to begin white-washing the house there and then, as she had heard some friends of hers were coming to the pattern, and they would be likely to visit her. Now, what she said about her friends' visits gave me the opening for what I wanted to say, but my heart was beating so fast that I had to let the chance go by. Then, after a while, I began to say how I had friends, too, and that I wanted to visit them. She didn't take that easy on account of all the stuff that was in the house for the weaving, but my mind was made up, and she had to give in to me. And of course she knew that I was taking the child that was living

with us, Owen, the little lad from the Paralons'. She made provision for us, and brought out warm clothes for Owen, and in the morning we took to the road, leaving the yarn to be woven by Peter Martin, the travelling weaver, who used to stay in the house.

"We walked part of the way, and I carried Owen part of the way, and for parts of the way we got lifts on carts. We came over a good many miles on the first day, and I told Owen over again about the times I had in the place we were going to. Ah! them were happy times for me, and it's no wonder I remembered them and could talk about them to the little lad! The world hadn't made itself hard for me then. I could put the flute to my mouth and play when the cages were gathered up on the bank, after my jewel of a singing bird had drawn the other birds down to its cage, and we had caught them in flocks. And when I'd go home when 'twas dark, there was always the song or the story by my uncle's fire. It's no wonder I remembered them days, and that my stories of them times could shorten the road for Owen! An end came to the first day's rambling, and I asked for a shelter at a house by the road. The woman made us welcome to the fire, but she had no bed to give us. I took down the reaping-hook, and I went outside and cut the tops of the heather and brought in a bed for myself and Owen. The sweet-smelling tops of the heather! The best bed that a man ever lay upon.

"The crops didn't look well in our own country. The potatoes that were dug made us think that there was a poor prospect before us. But the prospect

seemed blacker in the country that we were going into, for they seemed to have a heavier and a more constant rain. It was a poor country; we saw it in the falling rain, and that made it all the more desolate. We didn't see any comfortable houses on the second day's journey; we saw wet hills with lone sheep climbing them, and we saw bogs with stretches of ceanavaun, and all their white heads drooped in the rain. On a wet, dark night we came to a house. It was a poor little place, but we could go no further. They gave us a bed by the hearth, but their fire was only the wet sods and the bits of sticks. The children that sat round were white and quiet, and when we broke the cake we had with us we offered them a share. Shame-faced enough the children took the bread. When we were making a start in the morning the woman of the house came to us. 'Turn back,' she said, 'for there's misfortune on this country. The rain was constant on the ridges, and our little children will die of hunger.' She followed us out on the road. 'Turn back,' she said, 'turn back.'

"We went on, but my heart was low enough, I tell you, when I carried Owen in my arms, and saw how poor-looking were the children that we met along the roads. We were coming to the place of my mother's people, but how did I know whether the people there would not be poorer than the people we met, and how did I know whether there would be any comfort for Owen, or any welcome before us at all? Then we came to a place that I knew well, a green space with a cromlech in it and big stones around. It was there we used to have the dances in the old times. I gave Owen the shelter

of the cromlech, and I sat beside him with very lonesome feelings. I remembered the dances there, and how I used to make music for the couples, and I remembered a girl who used to sit beside me when I played, and who used to dance with me when I danced. It was no wonder that I was lonesome and dispirited, and without courage to face the journey before me.

"We sat there by the stones for a while, Owen and myself, watching the rain falling. The road was bare and empty for a time, and then we saw a lone woman, a traveller or a tramp, coming along. The woman came over to talk to us, and we found out that she was going to the country that we had left. She wasn't going by the road, but by a short way across the hills. She didn't know us at all, but all the same she had news for us. My wife's brother, a foreman in England, had come back to his place on a visit. The woman had seen him in the place where she was last, and she knew that he was going to visit at our home. 'He is a rich, high-up man,' said the travelling-woman, 'and the house where he is does be filled up with money and presents. He's staying with his sister for a week only, but the weaver's house will be worth going into while he's there. I'll be at Mrs. Philabeen's tomorrow, for I know a short way across the hills.'

" 'Will you go back?' said I to the child, 'the man from England will have lovely things for you, and I don't think that there's any warmth or comfort before us.' 'No,' said Owen, 'we won't go back till the rise of the year.' I let the travelling-woman go, and I took little Owen by the hand, and we went

on towards the house that I knew. And Owen walked on so manfully that my own courage came back to me. We came to my uncle's house, and it was a happy story with us for the length of time we were there. Their turf was well saved, and they had meal and potatoes and bacon. And we showed Owen the wood and the lake, the squirrel gathering up its store, and the crane rising out of the tufts, and the badger coming out of its hole. Then came the rise of the year, and young Owen and myself made the start for home, well pleased with ourselves, though indeed the kindly people weren't satisfied that we should go."

The weaver came to the end of his story, and then he sat looking at them silently; he was as silent as Maurya, his wife, the woman who had not spoken, and Owen felt the long silences that were in that house. Wistfully, and half-rememberingly the man at the loom looked on him. And when Owen Paralon arose and took up his pack Michael Philabeen came to where he stood at the door and put his hand on his shoulder. Then Owen stepped out of the silent house.

It was in that house he had seen a loom for the first time—that loom that, perhaps, had stayed in his mind, forming his dreams of being a merchant and a manufacturer. And out of the far past he had heard the story of that journey that had made his peddler's going up and down not strange to him.

Now he was on his way back to his sister's house. He had found and had secured a place that was like the one that had been denied him in Cahirmoy. He

would go there at once, and start building up his business. It would be long before he would come to Honor's again after this: the place he was going to was not really far, but for people who did not travel it was a distance that meant separation.

CHAPTER VIII

A DEPARTURE AND A RETURN

HONOR railed for the length of a day at those whose intolerance barred her brother from settling near the place where he was born and reared. But she would have it known that there was a judgment over those who did it! Owen's people, the Gilroys, had been there before they who owned Cahirmoy had set a foot in the place, and they would be there after them: they would be there when the Seagrave name would not be heard of; when, if it were mentioned at all, the people would turn around from the fire to ask what name had been spoken.

So Honor held forth. Afterwards she returned to the dream she had. It was always that way—her dream would come out: there was the change in the household—Owen's going made that—and there would be affluence too. . . . Brigid heard her mother questioning Nannie Gilroy about her brother James and the shop and how much money he would be making. Martin Jordan's field was in her mind—the green field on the hillside that she could see from her doorway.

Once, when she was stepping out of his room, Brighid had a curious thought come to her—the house would be lonely for Owen, but there would be vacancy—something that one could move about in. It would be almost like being in another house with different beginnings for her. She went back into his room, and closed the door, and looked at herself in the mirror that was on the black chest of drawers—the mirror that Owen shaved before and that was bigger than the one that was in their room.

She thought of Francis Gillick and of the great loss it was that he was not here so that he and Owen might have talks together. He was away longer than he said he would be away. Owen had told her that he had trust in Francis Gillick, and that he wanted to talk to him about the place and about the things he should like him to do.

Owen and Brighid had talks together in the garden before the house, both seated on the grassy bank there, where the sloe bushes made a sort of bower. He told her that the hundred and fifty pounds that would have been his fine in Cahirmoy would be left for her dowry; he would put more to it so that when she went out of the house she would have a bigger dowry than the girl of any family that they knew. Or else he would bring her to the town he was going to, and have her taught a business there. Oona would stay on, and the boy she married would stay on in the house, and house and land would go to them from Honor.

Already he had gone some way from her, and she thought of him as one who had been good to her, who was good to her. And there was no one who

knew him, this man who went the roads by himself, this dark, quickly-flushing man with his intent look and his harsh voice. He talked about her marriage, and about Oona's marriage—he would be a watcher over them, but at a distance.

Owen Paralon was not to leave until after a dramatic confrontation had taken place. No less a person than David Moore came to the house on the last day that Owen was to be in Honor's. He was on horseback. Now it happened that David Moore had a poor seat in a saddle; a gander, striking out with his wings and dashing somewhere caused the horse to slither on the wet cobble-stones of the yard. Off fell the rider and so in an unchancy way Sir John Seagrave's agent came under Honor Paralon's roof.

So gross was Sir John Seagrave in his relation with the country people; so prone was he to regard Owen Paralon and his like as serfs, that he had sent David Moore to ask for his vote in an election that had suddenly been announced. He would let Paralon have another place in Cahirmoy—not the shop in market square—there was a lien on that—but another in a different place that had since become vacant. David Moore had a notion that he could have talked all this over with Paralon while seated on his horse. But now he was actually under the roof and washing the mud of the yard off his hands; Honor had seen to it that a basin of hot water and a towel was ready for him as he crossed the threshold.

David Moore had sensitiveness enough and wit enough to make him realize the oddity of his mission. Now he was made feel the effrontery of it.

He spoke with diplomacy and tact, and out of the genuine penetration that he had.

And all the while he was being waited on and ministered to. The moment that Sir John Seagrave's agent was to be brought into the house the peasants became at once nobles: they listened to him with dignity; they treated him with consideration, and it was all done as if a whole stately tradition was embodied in the brother and sister and the two young girls. Owen gave him a dignified message for Sir John Seagrave; he came with the departing guest; he held his horse while he mounted; he waited while he rode down the bohereen. And so, as between Owen Paralon and the owner of Cahirmoy, the last word was with Owen Paralon.

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Brigid and Oona knit stockings to let their uncle have a supply to take with him; Honor attended to the making of linen shirts, and she had a neighbour woman in to help her. A joiner, too, came into the house: Owen had got together a number of cedar boards, and the joiner was to make a chest for the belongings he was to take with him.

The evening of his going the people came in to bid him good-bye and wish him good-luck. They came in while Brigid was turning the last heel of the last stocking. A tailor who was working there finished up and the table he had been sitting on was moved away, and the place was cleared for the dance.

The elders sat together, and the women ex-

changed reminiscences with Honor about her family—which of them Owen was like, and what fortune followed Teig and Farrel who were mighty men in the days that were remembered. Owen was not close to the young people, but the prospect of a gathering of any kind brought boys and girls along. Nannie Gilroy brought in Maelshaughlinn, the youth who had played at the cross-roads dance. He had profited under her instruction, and he was now quite a social figure.

He made music for the dance that the young people pressed for. Brighid did not dance in the beginning. The music of the flute brought Francis Gillick up before her. She went to the door and stood looking out, thinking that she might see him come up the bohereen. "I suppose the little girl, Winnie, will marry the boy left in the house, Francis Gillick," she heard a woman say. Then Brighid went outside. The corncrakes had come to the meadows, and they craked on and on. A sense of irretrievable loss came over the girl as she stood outside the house where music was being played.

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Before the music in Honor Paralon's had ceased, Francis Gillick, riding a weary horse, had come to a house nearby. He turned his horse into a field beside the road and went into the dark cabin.

There was no fire on the hearth. When he lifted the latch a weak voice said: "Who's that?"

"Francis Gillick."

"I'm in bed, Francis Gillick. And what brings you here at this hour of the night?"

"Is there any way of getting a light?"

"Maybe there's seed in the fire still, Francis. And on the dresser there's a bit of a candle I was saving."

Francis Gillick went to the hearth and drew a glimmering coal out of the ashes. He blew upon it and then lit a splinter of bog-deal. He found the bit of candle; he lit it, and brought the light over to where the old man lay in bed.

"What brings you into my cabin this way?" said Martin Jordan.

"I'm to meet a party here—you understand, Martin. There are too many people in other houses. There's only yourself here."

"A party of night-walkers, is it? Oh, it's a bad turn you and them would do me, bringing the police to watch me and my little cabin."

"It won't happen but this once. I got orders to come here."

He opened his coat and showed a satchel hanging under it. Out of this satchel he took a small bottle of whiskey, bread, tobacco, and a paper of tea. Martin Jordan's eyes became alive. Francis Gillick found a dusty egg-cup on the dresser, and he filled it with spirits. The old man drank and became aroused.

And now there was a knocking at the door. Francis Gillick opened it. There entered four men.

The men wore heavy, caped coats of the kind that are called "cothamores," and hats that looked as if they had been a long time cast off. Each had a

piece of crape across his face. One of them took the crape off—he was Kiernan Mulcahy.

“So, Gillick,” he said, “you’re the one that is to swear us in.”

“I’m the man that you were to meet here to-night. But as to swearing you in, I’m not going to do that—not to-night, at any rate.”

“Haven’t you your orders to do it?”

“My orders aren’t what you think. I’m not going to swear any one in. Who are your men?”

“Men from Monamore, a place at the back of Castle Conquer. They belong to a combination—they’re ‘Right Boys’ if you want to know. They’re ready and I’m ready to take the oath from any one that was sent to give it to us.”

“I’m not going to give any oath,” said Francis Gillick.

“Why not, in the name of God?”

“I have a good many things I want to consider first, I tell you. What were your men doing?”

“Collecting arms.”

“Moonlighting?”

“You might call it that. The men insist upon having arms, so we went searching houses that were likely to have some. But if you won’t give us the oath, what’s the use of us talking with you? I’ll leave now. I’m all knocked up with this racket. It’s ten years in gaol if any of us is caught. I tell you it’s a wicked job searching these Orange houses for guns. I’ve been bit by a dog in three places. Came up quietly and chawed me. Is there a dog hereabouts?”

“No.”

"Well, Gillick, there's no reason for us to be staying here. Out and disperse, men."

The men with the crape on their faces had been whispering together. Under his big coat each had a gun. They went out with Kiernan Mulcahy; Francis Gillick heard them dash swiftly along the laneway that led to the road.

"Musha, Francis, I didn't like the look of the black-vizard lads at all," said Martin Jordan. "I'm glad you had so little to do with them." He was up and at the fire now; he hung the kettle above the blaze. Francis Gillick sat before the fire. Then, without knowing it, he fell asleep. When he awakened the dawn had come. He stood up on the floor of the strange cabin. . . .

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Brighid had gone into the house. When twelve o'clock came Owen went up to his room, and Brighid, who realized the significance of that movement, went after him. He closed the door, and said:

"I won't go into the kitchen again until I'm ready to go. John Cummins is to come for me at the first light." Brighid, as a child, had often seen him dressing. The familiar action and the sight of the chest that was made for his going and that was now filled with his belongings, affected her. She cried: "How will we do without you, Owen?"

"It's not far to where I'm going, Brighid," he said.

Honor came into the room. She was overcome—

largely by the sense of parting, and partly as a response to lamentations for her brother's going and to the praise of him that was spoken by men and women around the fire. She had taken some half-glasses of whiskey, and this, too, had affected her. The people who had come in thought it would be friendly to leave the family to themselves, and when Owen went amongst them with his changed clothes on, everybody took his hand for a parting clasp. The company departed. Brighid brought in fresh turf and kindled up the fire. They took the last meal, and then knelt down to recite the rosary.

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The morning light was making the candles feeble. Then John Cummins, who was to carry the traveler and his chest, came in. They were at the litany then. He stood on the floor, holding his hat before his face while he made the responses.

Honor and Oona were to go some of the way with Owen; Brighid was willing to stay in the house; she would get some sleep and be equal to the work of the day that had come. "The blessing of God be on you," Owen said to her as he embraced her. They went out of the house together. Brighid watched them go down the bohereen; Honor and Oona were seated on the cart, and Owen and John Cummins were walking beside.

She came in and she sat down before the lifeless fire. The geese came before the door, making their strident cries. The whole harshness of the day was

before her. She saw the things that she was used to seeing, and she saw them all in a disappointing light—the broken floor, the little window, the old dresser with the long-kept vessels on its shelves. It was a small and a poor place to be in.

How was it that she had once thought that some fortune would come to her across that doorstep? She knew now that nothing would ever come. Something had come and it was gone—Francis Gillick had brought it. But now he was gone away; they had not been able to do anything that would hold him.

He would never return to them. Something had possessed him to go off—some unaccountable thing, and now, most likely, he was gone out of Ireland, and they would never see him again. Ah, if they had only said something, shown him something, that would have caused him to stay! That night he had been going to speak to her; now she would never hear what he had been going to say.

Hands were laid upon her shoulders, and when she turned around she saw Francis Gillick. "Francis!" she cried, and grasped his hands. She saw that his boots were broken, and that his face was twitching continuously. "Owen has gone," he said, "Martin Jordan told me that only now. If Owen had seen me working here for a while longer . . ."

"And if he had, Francis?"

"He would have let me marry you, Owen would."

"And would I want to marry you, do you think?"

"Surely, Brighid, surely."

Her hand was on his shoulder and she looked into his face as if she looked at all the world and

into all life there. Tears came into her eyes. "I would, I would, I would," she cried, and she turned away.

"We will live as people sworn to each other," he said.

"How will we swear?"

"Kneel, and put your hands touching mine. A student who came from near Egypt told me of this rite of marriage. We kneel at each side of the fire. Our hands touch at the palms."

"Not now, not now, Francis."

"We will live, not as married people, but as people sworn to each other. Kneel." In the wide and deep ashes he drew two figures. Above them and below he made a circle. "They are Greek letters. They stand for the spirit and the flesh," he said.

"Oh, but will this not bring bad luck upon us?"

"If it is not done in vain—no. Kneel, Brighid, kneel. Put your palms against mine. Say the prayers you think of. I'll say a prayer in Latin. Now, Brighid Moynagh."

She put her hands against his, finger touching finger, and palm upon palm. She felt that soft threads were being put around their hands, binding them together. She could not think of a prayer to say. The Latin words that she heard brought dimly-remembered Irish words to her mind—the words of a prayer that she used to hear her grandmother say: "O holy Saint Brighid, guard me, protect me, put your mantle around me this day and this night." She said the words. Then they rose to their feet and kissed each other: the cocks were

crowing, the last candle had gone out, the daylight was full.

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And then the birds were at their first songs; there was a double cuckoo-note even, for a cuckoo before the house and a cuckoo behind the house called, and their notes blended. They sat together and they did not speak, and of the errand that he was upon he would not speak yet.

They heard the creaking of the cart, and Francis Gillick went out to meet those who were coming.

John Cummins, the blacksmith, eyed him. Significantly he looked him over, and Francis Gillick thought the blacksmith was taking stock of him, noting the man whom Luke Leonard and Kiernan Mulcahy had spoken of in the forge.

Honor sat in the cart alone; with a black shawl around her head she looked like a queen of the nomads. "Musha, Francis, did you get back?" It was Oona who said this; she had been walking behind the cart, and now she ran to the restored Francis. Her mother dismounted and went into the house with hardly a greeting to him.

Then Francis Gillick was left beside the cart and horse and with the blacksmith, John Cummins. The blacksmith eased the horse of the shafts of the cart, all the while looking at Francis Gillick.

"How long will you be here, young man?" he asked.

"I am ready to go," said Francis Gillick. Then

he saw that the blacksmith looked at him in surprise; it was evident that he had not expected so decisive an answer.

"There is a message for you," he said, looking him over again.

"A message! For me?" Now it was Francis Gillick who was surprised. "Who sent it to me?" he asked.

"A lad you know," said the smith. He made a gesture that indicated Luke Leonard.

"And where did you see him?"

"At Eglish, and no later than this morning," said John Cummins.

Francis Gillick was surprised that a communication should come through to him, for he had felt the desert around him. He was surprised, too, that at this stage he should hear from the young organizer who, two days before, he had left at the Clann Melidh meeting. "And what did Luke Leonard tell you to say to me?" he demanded.

"He gave me this for you." Thereupon the smith produced a letter with a heavy seal. Francis Gillick stood aside to open it, and the smith, leaving the horse at rest, went into the house.

What Francis Gillick read there left all his faculties suspended. He stood for a while, wholly an unthinking man. It had been settled that he was to leave Honor Paralon's and enter a dangerous mission that would probably take him out of Ireland. It was this compulsion that had made him importunate with Brighid, that had given him the opportunity that brought her to join her hands with his in the rite that he had remembered. And now

there was no need for him to go; the plans that had to do with his going were all abandoned. He might remain at Honor Paralon's.

He stood there, looking at his horse that he had left at the top of the bohcreen, and that was now cropping grass off the ditch. He looked at it, and for a moment nostalgia for places he might have moved in, for a life that his mind had been bitterly bent upon, came over him. And then he turned to the house. It was like coming to that house all over again. Brighid was there; he would see her to-day, and to-morrow, and for wonderful days in succession; he would not be exiled from this house and from her.

And so he went within, and standing at the door he looked over to Brighid. She was making ready the meal, doing everything, as he thought, with a gravity and a grace that belonged to the angels. He was free now and she loved him and trusted him.

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Honor brought out the tidings that had given her more haughtiness and a greater assurance of a change in fortune.

At the railway station at Eglish they had encountered Father Bartley Moynagh. He had gone up to Owen and had shaken hands with him. This was an important demonstration in the history of the family, and Brighid asked to be told more about it.

For Father Bartley Moynagh had refused to have communication with Honor, with the woman with

whom, as he declared, his nephew had made an ill-advised marriage. After that marriage he had been abroad. Now he had been back for some years. Brighid had often seen her grand-uncle in Eglish, but Father Bartley had given no sign that he recognized her as any kin.

And now he had made this demonstration. It was wonderful that he had been moved to it after twenty years. Honor's anticipation of a change in fortune began to have some justification. It would be Brighid who would be favoured; Father Bartley had shown a particular interest in her, and had asked that she would visit him. The talk went on about the priest, his goings and comings, his place and his influence. After the meal John Cummins went off with his cart to Cahirmoy, and Francis Gillick went to work outside.

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His work was in the garden before the door. The green and growing oats stirred and murmured in the field next the garden; birds went busily and purposively to their nestlings; the rods of the willows glistened in the sun. Francis Gillick worked, putting the sun-steeped clay upon the ridges.

He worked through the morning. With its door closed and its chimney smokeless, the house seemed in a drowse: those within were sleeping or were listless after the night's assembly and the early morning journey. He was putting mould on the special ridges of potatoes that were there.

The lot that would have taken him from the house

and from Brighid had been withdrawn, and Francis Gillick rejoiced on that account. Now he would stay on here. He would earn Honor's esteem by the way he minded and managed the place; she would agree and Owen would agree to his taking Brighid. Brighid! The ash-tree in the garden recalled her; it was young and slender with little burthen of branches or of leaves. He would go away for a while later on, and some other boy would work here while he was away. Then he would go on a voyage and come back with money in his belt—money enough for anything that Honor wanted. He would build a room to the house, a room for Brighid and himself. The young ash-tree came into his mind again, and he watched it with its youthful, unopulent, full-sapped grace. Rooted in a thick soil it was. And she and the ash-tree grew together and to themselves, away from the cross-roads and the throng.

Owen was gone. That was something like good fortune for him, Francis Gillick! Owen's going left him the guardian of the house; it was his to cherish Brighid, to be Oona's brother, to be Honor's son.

She was coming, Brighid was coming to him now; she was at the door, her head showing its oriflamme of hair. She was bringing him something; there was buttermilk in the pitcher, no doubt.

She brought him where there was a growth of sloe-bushes that hid them from the house. They sat down there and clasped hands. She looked at him searchingly, but tenderly, too, and eagerly. "You're not satisfied with me, Brighid," he said. "Oh, yes,"

she cried, still searching his face. "And do you love me?" "I love you," he said, "my heart gets wings when I think of you." "Is that the way it's with you? My heart stops beating when it all comes over me. Is that more of love than you have, do you think?"

She went on. "I used to let Oona bring your victuals to you when you'd be working away from the house. And here am I now thieving out with buttermilk to you and thinking that's the greatest thing. I wonder how long I can stay now."

"What were you thinking of since, Brighid?"

"Of the letters you made," she said.

He drew the Greek letters again with the circle above them. She slipped down on her knees and bent over them. "By this we will live as people pledged to each other," he said. He did not tell her of the nearness to separation that had made him draw her to him; he did not tell her where he had been or what errand he had been on, or of the order given to him that had been revoked—to speak to any one about these things was forbidden by the oath of secrecy he had taken.

"But you won't let anyone know that we're pledged—sure you won't, Francis?"

"No, Brighid, no—not until your mother thinks well of me—well enough to let me take you, Brighid."

"It would be hard to know about my mother," she said. "It would be hard for you to know what she would do. We must not let anyone know."

"People will see that I'm delighted with myself,"

said Francis Gillick, "but they'll think it's because I'm more mad than ever."

"And if I look changed," said Brighid, "they'll think it's because my uncle has left us. Drink your buttermilk now, Francis, I'm in dread the door will be opened any minute now."

They huddled together, speaking in intense whispers, for smoke was coming from the chimney now. The door was opened. Neither Oona nor Honor appeared, but Brighid knew she must leave the garden. They watched the house through the bushes while his arm pressed around her neck. Then she drew away from him and went into the house. She left something on his little finger—a child's thimble that she had had for years and years.

CHAPTER IX

A MEETING MISSED

BRIGHID had let Francis Gillick know, or thought she had let him know, that they could meet outside that evening. He was going to the mill for a sack of meal. She mentioned to Oona and her mother that she would go to the rosary in Cahirmoy chapel. She hadn't been going all through the month, but her going on one of the last evenings—it was now towards the end of May—would not be challenged.

However, Brighid overdid the casualness of her announcement. . . . Francis Gillick, who was trying to reconcile two different orders that Honor was giving him, did not hear about the rosary. The mill was beyond the chapel and he would pass by it on his way back. He started off with the ass that was to carry the sack of meal across its back, and, some time after, Brighid, a shawl across her head, started off.

She sang gaily to herself as she went on—

'Tis not your gold does me entice,
And by my parents I'll be advised,
And I never do intend at all
To be at any young man's call.

She saw Nannie Gilroy at her gate; she waved a hand to her as she sang with a certain devil-may-careness about the renunciation of the maiden's caution and pride—

He turned his back to go away;
She called him back and bid him stay:
Stay, stay, young man, my heart is true,
And I can fancy none but you.
Stay, stay, young man, my heart is true,
And I can fancy none but you.

And now my roving days are past,
And joy and comfort comes at last,
The girl that always answered nay,
She proves my comfort night and day,
The girl who always answered nay,
She proves my comfort night and day.

She went along the road, more ready to laugh and sing in the lovely twilight than she had been for all the year before. She came into the chapel as the bell ceased ringing. There was little of a congregation—girls of the devotee kind—*voteens* as they were rather mockingly called, children and some elders. Brigid walked towards the altar, feeling in herself a virtue or a beauty that was very sufficing. But she bent her head at the prayers; she was pleased with the responses that she murmured.

She would go out slowly with the others and she would speak with the people who would be gathered outside. Francis Gillick would be below the chapel; he would be down towards the street of the

town, likely. They'd have the whole length of the road to walk together.

Francis Gillick was not in sight. She looked back along the road that led from the mill; he was not on the way. She went towards the street of the town. There she attached herself to a couple of girls, and stood talking to them. But perhaps he had gone on and she should not delay! But had he come at all yet? The girls went on their way, and Brighid, who would be noticed if she loitered, turned homeward. He was bound to be just before her.

Francis Gillick was in John Cummins' forge, and the ass, with the sack of meal across its back, was standing outside.

Brighid went on. She did not know whether she should make pauses in her walk, look behind and wait, or whether she should hurry ahead. She did both. She would pause for a while and then she would hurry on. Once she retraced her steps. Then she hurried on more quickly. And all the time the way that they might have had together was becoming shorter and shorter. No longer she sang gaily to herself—

Go, begone, you shy young dame,
If you'll be shy I'll be the same.

Why did he not come? Dear, dear, dear! And that smell of meadowsweet from the fields! She went slowly now, sometimes shaking her shawl out angrily, sometimes stopping and almost crying. She was back at Nannie's house. And there was Nannie, still beside her gate.

"Good evening, Nannie."

"Well, did you see any one on the road?"

"No. Did you see any one?"

"Divil a one."

Francis Gillick hadn't passed, then. He was waiting for her in the street of the town. Probably the rosary was over early. It certainly had been very short that evening. He was waiting for her. Or else he was coming after her. She would stay and talk with Nannie.

"How do you feel after your uncle going? Very down in the mouth, I suppose. I don't blame you. I suppose you'll be leaving this place and going up to live with him. They're no good. Who? The boys about here—you'd have to put the bag on your back for them. Oh, I'd see one far before I'd have anything to say to him—I'd see him as far as I'd see a white cow in a bog. Cross, am I? I'm as cross as a thunder-storm."

So Nannie went on. Then "Here's Francis Gillick, and he driving an ass that's on three legs." Brighid did not look around. As he came up to the pair Nannie said, "Will you take this little girl back with you, Francis Gillick? Go with him, Brighideen. In troth, I'd like to see you and this young fellow taking a walk in the night." Nannie came from the gate, and, talking all the time about leaving them together, and continuously telling Brighid that they could get home safely now, went step for step with them, Francis Gillick and Brighid silent, and Nannie talking all the time.

Up the bohereen she went with them, dogging

them and dinning them. What was the matter with Nannie that she would not stay at home this evening? And was there no one else for her to talk to but themselves? She'd come up to the door with them now and into the house. Well, let it be so! Why hadn't Francis come when he should have come?

But Nannie turned back as she left them before the door. "Francis Gillick, Brighid will see you past the gander," she said. This last sentence of hers really made Brighid cross. . . . "Take me past the gander," a young fellow would say when he was leaving a house and wanted a girl to come out with him. There was Nannie saying that, and was she mocking them?

She was gone now, and Francis and Brighid looked at each other. "Where were you, Francis? I didn't see you and I coming from the rosary." "I was in the forge. But were you at the rosary this evening, Brighid?" "I was, in troth. Were you not minding when I said I'd be going?" "I didn't hear you saying it." "Oh, you weren't minding."

They stood looking at each other. "And here we're back at the house," said Brighid.

He took her hand, and then he put his arm around her, and then he held her in his arms. For the first time they were as lovers. His kiss, her kiss. But they had missed the long way together, and there could be no dalliance now. She whispered, "good night, good night," and went from him. She opened the door and went into the house.

She thought she would sit away from her mother and Oona, and watch Francis Gillick and listen to

him. He would sit at the fire like a young man who had come to visit them: it was long since she had seen him sitting there, and it would be all new to watch him as she would watch him now.

Oona had two candles lighted, and she was reading, or rather she was spelling out a story to her mother. Francis Gillick came in, having left the ass in its shelter; he came in carrying the sack, and he left it in a corner.

What Oona was reading was about Castle Conquer. She brought the journal to him and she asked him to begin it all over again and read the story to the end. She brought the candle near him. The paper he was given was the weekly journal that came to the house on Thursdays.

In a while he was reading about Castle Conquer. What he was reading belonged to a series that had to do with the traditions of that part of the country. Some one acquainted with their countryside was writing these sketches.

Honor sat in the corner with the firelight upon her; Oona took a place near Francis. He looked at Brighid before he began to read. She came near. Yes, she would go with him to Castle Conquer.

THE LONG DANCE

We were amongst the cabins that had been abandoned forty years ago when this story was told us, (it began). The friend who was with us said:

“Even now, when they drive their cattle up into the hills, people come and stay in these forsaken

hovels. They all belong to another time. And yet I knew the last man who lived in this forsaken hamlet.

"His name was Dermody—Eoghan or Eugene Dermody. When I knew him he was a bent old man who used to come to my grandmother's house two nights in the week—Sundays and Tuesdays, I think. He would take supper then—porridge and tea, or whatever was going. He was badly off, I knew. One night, I remember, I went to his house—here is its hearthstone—with a gift of candles from my grandmother. There was no light in the place, and there was hardly any peat upon the hearth. The old man lived quite alone. He did not light the candle till I left the house, for, I think, he did not like me to know how dependent he was upon such a gift. Often, I imagine, he had only a meal a day, and many's the night, I am sure, he sat without light or fire. He would call at no house but my grandmother's, and there he would only call on his customary nights—Sundays and Tuesdays.

"The night after I had been at his house I heard him speak of an incident in this story. Afterwards, when it was fixed in my mind, I talked to other people about it, and I got the whole story in this form.

"Amongst the notable families that still possessed certain feudal privileges were the de Courceys of this part of the country. They lived in their own territory, and their authority had not been abated by absenteeism. They possessed at the time this curious privilege—the privilege of reprieving from death a prisoner who lay in gaol in the town. They

had once the privilege of condemnation. Perhaps they had been left the milder one as a compensation for the loss of the penal privilege.

"To gain the reprieve from de Courcey the peasants had to go through a curious performance. They dance The Long Dance (*Rinnce Fada*) from the cross roads at Lismoy into the courtyard of the old castle. Coming into the courtyard they cried out 'We have danced the Long Dance—we beg a life, my lord.' I never heard how the custom grew up. Perhaps it originated in the whim of some lord or lady.

"And not less than twenty couples had to be in the dance, and no one of the dancers might be under or above young manhood or womanhood, and they all had to be from de Courcey's townland.

"A young man named Roger Martin was in Cahirmoy gaol under sentence of death. Eugene Dermody heard of it when he came back to the village. He had been away for months working in North Munster. The brother whom he shared his home with had left before, and Eugene had the house to himself when he returned.

"I heard him tell how he had brought meal on the back of his horse, how a little girl had brought him a pail of milk, how he had prepared his supper, and then, in the early evening, how he had sat down by the fire he made.

"Some one came to the door. When he looked he saw a girl—Mary Cantillon.

"Of all the people in his townland Mary was the one he had thought most about in the months he had been away. And, lo! She was the first person to

open his door. He thought there were others with her—but no; she had come by herself.

“ ‘Eugene,’ she said, ‘isn’t it good you are back.’ He used some endearing name to her and was eager in his welcome. ‘Amn’t I a wild girl,’ she said, ‘to come in on you like this? Come with me now—there’s going to be a dance.’ She took his hand and drew him to the door.

“ ‘Did you come to bring me to the dance, Mary?’

“ ‘I did. And did you hear yet about Roger Martin? We are going to dance the Long Dance for him.’ She spoke about Roger Martin and how he had been taken for the killing of a man, as they hurried along. ‘O Eugene,’ she said, ‘it was lucky you came back. There are girls to spare, but you know that the boys are away harvesting. You are the first of them back.’

“Eugene’s thought was for the rescue of Roger Martin. But all around that thought and suffusing it was the thought that Mary had come for him. She had smiled on him before, but he had thought she had looked past him. Now her liking for him had grown in his absence. She had come for him. He held her arm as they went along, and he thought that she was so close to him that there never could be any separation between them.

“ ‘What was Mary Cantillon like?’ I asked my grandmother. She was a delicately-featured girl whose brown eyes attracted many young fellows, but whose reticences left them baffled after a while. For all the admiration that was given her she was always remote.

“As they hurried on Eugene Dermody said:

“ ‘His father, they say, delivered a man when the people danced the Long Dance before. And if he was well-spoken to. . . .’

“ ‘You must speak to the lord, Eugene. There is no one can speak to him but you.’

“ ‘Oh, I couldn’t bring myself to speak to him.’

“ ‘You have the words—your father had them before you.’ She put her arms around his neck. He kissed her and he trembled, so much fervor filled his being then.

“She gripped his arm and they went hurrying. They came out on a road where groups of young men and women were waiting on the border of a plantation.

“In a few minutes the music began and the young men and women stood facing each other. Then the two pairs at the end of the line began the dance. At the end of the first movement the last couple, Eugene and Mary, were in the place of the second last. Then they and the pair above them danced, and they took their place above. Always they were moving up the line. And while they and the couple above them danced the other partners remained still. At the head of the line they, too, rested until they were the last partners in the line once more. In a dance with such long rests the young country people could cover three or more miles of the road. The old piper they took with them became tired out, and they had to wait a long time till someone fetched a fiddler.

“The dance began again. Eugene danced with Mary or he stood beside her while they waited. He thought it was for him and her that the piper and

the fiddler played, that there was such beauty in the trees and hedges and such light in the sky. At last they came to the gate of Conquer Castle. He and Mary were the first to go into the avenue darkened with the trees. The hounds in the kennels began barking. Mary was trembling when they stood still together. The moon shone over the trees, and he saw how strange and how resolute was her face. 'Mary,' he said, 'we are going to have Roger Martin delivered this night—you and me are the ones that are going to do it.' She put her hand up and touched his face. 'But you must speak to the lord, Eugene,' she said.

"At last they were in the courtyard of the castle. Servants brought lights out from the house and the stables. Old de Courcey had companions with him that night. They came with him into the courtyard. 'What brings ye all here?' shouted de Courcey.

" 'We have danced the Long Dance—we claim a life, my lord,' the peasants murmured.

" 'I know whose life—the fellow's that killed the gauger. I tell you that if I saved his life the government would take the de Courcey privilege away. They'd say I was partial to the lad that killed a gauger. And that's too like the truth. I can't do anything about it. But I'll have liquor brought out, and I'll let ye all drink my health.' A few of the people spoke out. 'Give us the warrant for his life, my lord.'

" 'Drink to my health, and leave it at that,' said de Courcey.

" 'A few said, 'Aye, that is all he can do.'

" 'Speak to him, Eugene,' Mary pleaded.

"Then Eugene Dermody went over to where old de Courcey stood. He began by reciting a poem complimentary to the de Courceys—a poem that his father who belonged to a family of poets had made. Then he went on to speak of Roger Martin. He spoke so eloquently that one of the gentlemen who were standing beside de Courcey said: 'By Jove, if they get the franchise they will make this fellow member of Parliament instead of you, de Courcey.' Eugene ended by improvising verses about the castle, the night, the generous lord ready to relieve the people from oppression. De Courcey was flattered. He showed that he was inclined to act a part that would give him a name for magnanimity amongst the people.

" 'We have danced the Long Dance—we claim a life, my lord,' they said again.

" 'We'll kiss the girls first,' said one of de Courcey's companions. The speaker came forward and another came forward. Some of the girls laughed and others retreated. The fiddler, who had some political sense, got the girls to stand in a row and the kissing was given a formal turn. 'Now, de Courcey,' said his companion, 'show yourself a good feudal lord and deliver the fellow.'

" 'I will,' said de Courcey. 'Which of ye will ride to Cahirmoy gaol with the warrant?'

"None of the peasants spoke. Mary went over to Eugene and touched his face again. 'I will ride, my lord,' said Eugene. 'Get me a horse out of your stables and give me the warrant.'

"De Courcey growled about giving a country fellow one of his blood-horses. But the peasants

begged it of him so tumultuously that he had to let the horse be brought out of the stable. Then he went into the castle to write the warrant. Eugene was mounted on the horse when the warrant was brought out. The dancers all shook hands with him and Mary's tears wet the hand that she held to her face.

"He had brought the warrant to the gaol before dawn and he rode back. At the castle gate a boy waited to take the horse from him. He saw a ghost-like figure—it was Mary Cantillon.

" 'I was waiting,' she said. 'I could not go home nor lie down till I saw you again. You saved him, Eugene.'

" 'De Courcey's warrant saved him,' he said. 'God bless you, girl, for waiting to see me.'

" 'You must,' she said, 'leave something upon me—give me something to do for you that will make up for this.'

" 'Oh, Mary, my dear, dear Mary,' he cried.

"His earnestness, that was beyond the earnestness of the young men whom she had pleased before, startled the girl. She went to him and put her arms around his neck in a passionate kindness. 'Oh, Eugene,' she said, 'I waited to hear the news of my true-lover, Roger Martin.'

"Then Eugene Dermody went home and he lived in this house here until the time when I knew him. Roger Martin was released. He and Mary went to America. She died in New Orleans the year after they left Ireland."

CHAPTER X

MAELSHAUGHLINN

YOUNG Maelshaughlinn was no longer in favour with Nannie Gilroy. When Brighid and Francis Gillick came upon him he was walking disconsolately away from her house. "To-day," he said, "I'm the lonesome poor fellow, without father or mother, a girl's promise, nor my own little horse." They walked along with him, and he began to tell them of his adventure.

Penitentially he began it, but he expanded with the swelling narrative. "This time last week," he said, "when I was there playing for you all I had no thought of parting with my own little horse. The English wanted beasts for a war, and the farmers about here were making horses out of the sweepings of the knackers' yards, and taking horses out of ha'penny lucky-bags to sell them to them. Yesterday morning I took out my own little beast and faced for Arvach fair. I met the dealer on the road. He was an Englishman, and, above all nations on the face of the earth, the English are the easiest to deal with in regard of horses. I mentioned the price—it was an honest price, but none of our own people would have taken the offer in any reasonable way. An Irishman would have cursed into his hat, so that he might shake the curses out over my head.

The Englishman took on to consider it, and my heart went threshing my ribs. Then he gave me my price; he paid me in hard, weighty, golden sovereigns, and went away, taking the little horse with him.

"I sat down on the side of the ditch to take a breath. Now you'll say that I ought to have gone back to work, and I'll say that I agree with you. But no man can be wise at all times. Anyway, I was sitting on a ditch, with a lark singing over every foot of ground, and nothing before me but the glory of the day. A girl came along the road, and, on my soul, I never saw a girl walking so finely. 'She'll be a head above every girl in the fair,' I said, 'and may God keep the brightness on her head.' 'God save you, Maelshaughlinn,' said the girl. 'God save you, my jewel,' said I. I stood up to look after her, for a fine woman walking finely is above all the sights that man ever saw. Then a few lads passed, whistling and swinging their sticks. 'God give you a good day,' said the lads. 'God give you luck, boys,' said I. And there was I, swinging my stick after the lads, and heading for the fair.

" 'Never go into a fair where you've no business.' That's an owl saying and a wise saying, but never forget that neither man nor immortal can be wise at all times. Satan fell from Heaven, Adam was cast out of Paradise, and even my uncle broke his pledge.

"When I came into the fair there was a fiddler playing behind a tinker's cart. I had a shilling to spend in the town, and so I went into Flynn's and asked for a cordial. A few most respectable men came in then, and I asked them to take a treat from

me. Well, one drank and another drank, and then Rose Heffernan came into the shop with her brother. Young Heffernan sent the glasses round, and then I asked Rose to take a glass of wine, and I put down a sovereign on the counter. The fiddler was coming down the street, and I sent a young lad out to him with silver. I stood for a while talking with Rose, and I heard the word go round the shop concerning myself. It was soon settled that I had got a legacy. The people there never heard of any legacies except American legacies, and so they put my fortune down to an uncle who had died, they thought, in the States. Now I didn't want Rose to think that my money was a common legacy out of the States, so by half-words I gave them to understand that I had got my fortune out of Mexico. Mind you, I wasn't far out when I spoke of Mexico, for I had a grand-uncle who went out there, and his picture is in the house this present minute.

"Well, after the talk of the Mexican legacy went round, I couldn't take any treats from the people, though indeed plenty were offered me. I asked everyone to drink again. I think the crowds of the world stood before Flynn's counter. A big Con-nachtman held up what he said was a Mexican dollar, and I took it out of his hand and gave it to Rose Heffernan. I paid him for it too; it comes into my mind now that I paid him for it twice.

"There's not on the track of the sun a place to come near Arvach on the day of a fair. A man came along leading a black horse, and the size of the horse and the eyes of the horse would terrify you. There was a drift of sheep going by, and the fleece

of each was worth gold. There were tinkers with their carts of shining tins, as ugly and as quarrelsome fellows as ever beat each other to death in a ditch, and there were the powerful men, with the tight mouths, and the eyes that could judge of a beast, and the dark handsome women from the mountains. To crown all, a piper came into the town by the other end, and his music was enough to put the blood like a mill-race through your heart. The music of the piper, I think, would have made the beasts walk out of the fair on their hind legs, if the music of the fiddler didn't charm them to be still. Judith O'Reilly and Baun Driscoll were on the road, and Rose Heffernan was talking to them. Judith O'Reilly has the best wit and the best discourse of any woman within the four seas of Ireland, and she said to the other girls as I came up, 'Faith, girls, the good of the mission will be gone from us since Maelshaughlinn came into the fair, for the young women will be talking about him, and not about the sermon coming home from the mission.' 'It's not the best manners,' said I, 'to treat girls to a glass across a counter, but come into a shop,' said I, 'and let me pay for your fancy.' Well, I got Baun Driscoll to ask for a net for her hair. They don't sell these nets less than by the dozen, so I bought a dozen nets for Baun's hair. I bought ear-rings and brooches, dream-books and fortune-books, buckles and combs, and I thought I had spent no more money than I'd thank you for picking off the ground. A tinker woman came in and offered to tell the girls their fortunes, and I had to cross her hand with silver.

"I came out on the street after that, and took a few turns through the fair. The noise and the crowd were getting on my mind, and I couldn't think with any satisfaction, so I went into Mrs. Molloy's, and sat for a while in the snug. I had peace and quiet there, and I began to plan out what I would do with my money. I had a notion of going into Clooney on Tuesday, and buying a few sheep to put on my little fields, and of taking a good craftsman home from the fair, a man who could put fine thatch on my little house so that Nannie would like to be looking at it. I made up my mind to have the doors and windows shining with paint, to plant a few trees before the door, and to have a growing calf in the garden before the house. In a while, I thought, I could have another little horse to be my comfort and my consolation. I wasn't drinking anything heavier than light ale, so I thought the whole thing out quietly. After a while I got up, bid good-bye to Mrs. Molloy, and stood at the door to watch the fair.

"There was a man just before me with the pea and thimble, and I never saw a trick-of-the-loop with less sense of the game. He was winning money right and left, but that was because the young fellows before him were like motherless calves. Just to expose the man I put down a few pence on the board. In a short time I had fleeced my showman. He took up his board and went away, leaving me shillings the winner.

"I stood on the edge of the pavement wondering what I could do that would be the beating of the things I had done already. By this time the fiddler

and the piper were drawing nigh to each other, and there was a musician to the right of me, and a musician to the left of me. I sent silver to each, and told them to cease playing as I had something to say. I got up on a cart and shook my hat to get silence. I said 'I'm going to bid the musicians play in the market square, and the man who gets the best worth out of his instrument will get a prize from me.' The words were no sooner out of my mouth than men, women, and children made for the market square like two-year-olds let loose.

"You'd like the looks of the fiddler, but the piper was a black-a'vised fellow that kept a troop of tinkers about him. It was the piper who said 'Master, what's the prize to be?' Before I had time to think the fiddler was up and talking. 'He's of the oul' ancient race,' said the fiddler, 'and he'll give the prize that the Irish nobility gave to the musicians—a calf, the finest calf in the fair, a white calf with skin as soft as the fine mist on the ground, a calf so gentle that the smoothest field under it would look as rough as a bog.' And the fiddler was that lifted out of himself that he nearly leapt over a cart. Somebody pushed in a young calf, and then I sat down on a stone, for there was no use in saying anything or trying to hear anything after that. The fiddler played first, and I was nearly taken out of my trouble when I heard him, for he was a real man of art, and he played as if he was playing before a king, with the light of heaven on his face. The piper was spending his silver on the tinkers, and they were all deep in drink when he began to play. At the first sound of his pipes an old tinker-woman

fell into a trance. It was powerful, but the men had to tie him up with a straw rope, else the horses would have kicked the slates off the market-house roof. Nobody was quiet after that. There was a thousand men before me offering to sell me ten thousand calves, each calf whiter than the one before. There was one party round the fiddler and another party round the piper. I think it was the fiddler that won; anyway, he had the strongest backing, for they hoisted the calf on to a cart, and they put the fiddler beside it, and the two of them would have got out of the crowd, only the tinkers cut the traces of the cart. I was saved by a few hardy men who carried me through the market-house and into Flynn's by a back way, and there I paid for the calf.

"When I came out of Flynn's the people were going home quiet enough. I got a lift on Fardy's cart, and everybody, I think, wanted me to come to Clooney on Tuesday next. I think I'd have got out of Arvach with safety, only a dead-drunk tinker wakened up and knew me, and he gave a screech that brought the piper hot-foot after me. First of all the piper cursed me. He had a bad tongue, and he put on me the blackest, bitterest curses you ever heard in your life. Then he lifted up the pipes, and he gave a blast that went through me like a spear of ice. The man that sold me the calf gave me a luck-penny back, and that's all the money I brought out of Arvach fair.

" 'Never go into the fair where you have no business.' That's a wise saying, and I've told Nannie Gilroy that it's a saying that will be a guide to me for the rest of the days of my life."

CHAPTER XI

BRIGHID AND FRANCIS GILLICK

BRIGHID took to getting up early in the mornings: she would get out of bed when she heard the sow grunting as she moved about outside. Francis Gillick would have risen; he would have let the geese and the sow out of their pens by that time.

They would be together on these mornings; they would talk little; she would get ready the breakfast for him while he sat fixing or mending something. They used to have the house to themselves, and what they said to each other then had a wonderful significance. Sometimes, when it was exceptionally early, when there would be no stir from the sleeping-room, they sat at the table together, Brighid eating with him. She would be at the dresser washing up when her mother appeared; then Honor usually gave Francis Gillick directions for the work of the morning.

For the present the world and its interests were outside the world they were in. From the first their relation had been occult—it had been spelled out in strange letters that had the circle around them. Did it mean that she was wedded to him or only pledged to him? Wedded or pledged only—it was all the same to her then.

But there was more between them, because of the

occult letters, than a pledge. She had the phrase out of the catechism—"clandestine marriage." It had a dangerous, a forbidden sound. It came to her, giving her a tremor that had delight in it.

And now she came into possession of Owen's room. Brighid would go into it in the daytime—no one slept in it now—and sit on Owen's bed. Then she would be another person—not Honor Paralon's daughter, but one who had another title to existence. She would not stay there with her reverie long; in that house seclusion was not granted, and there were always claims against Brighid's, as well as against Oona's time. But it was something to be in that room by herself. There was a vase of blue glass there, and she used to put flowers into it. Then the silhouette of her that Francis had made was there on the wall. It would be grand to have a picture of him beside it. Still, although there was no sign of him there, although he had never been in it, Francis Gillick came to be there and to be more present in the room than her uncle was.

He did not tell her why he had drawn her to him on the morning of his return in the peremptory way; he did not tell her how close he had been to separation from her. Once he was on the verge of speaking to her about what was behind his going and his return.

They were again in the garden before the house. She began to tell him about someone she had lately seen in English. "A man that was in gaol. He has only one arm, and he has a little red beard; a simple, quiet man, you would say, and very humble to people. The sargeant told the man in the post

office that this man was in gaol for ten years. Think of that, Francis! In gaol in England and no one to talk to him for ten years. That was the reason he was so quiet and shrinking-like. And he learnt to be a tailor while he was in gaol! He has a little shop in English where he does his trade."

Over Francis Gillick there came again nostalgia for places of exile; once more he felt how he had steeled himself to bear a parting. He had been left out of the fight. He looked on the girl before him with her wonderful hair and her pale sapphire eyes and that look of hers that was an outflow of a spirit, generous, dear and kind. Beside her he saw the lame man with the little red beard; he saw him as he knew him, sitting patiently in his window in English, with ten years of his life gone from him. He was on the verge of telling her that he might be called upon to do as that man had done. But then he might not tell her; neither would it be good for her to hear of it.

"Think of that, Francis!"

"I know the man," he said. "He is Roger Lyons. He was sentenced to fifteen years in gaol. It was for firing at a policeman when a house was being searched for a man who had escaped. And Roger Lyons might not have been the man that fired the shot."

"Think of that!"

"He never flinched, and he never betrayed the comrade who was with him."

She did not know why he seemed to be looking backward when he spoke of this man.

Then he would be in the house in the evenings.

How dull it would be for Brighid when some one came in to make a *celidh*, making talk about uninteresting things—Nannie Gilroy, or Peter Gilroy, or any of the neighbours. The notion that he was teaching her something—Latin or Irish—still kept going. He would give her phrases and talk to her about them. He took down the books she had in the alcove, and would read passages to her and her mother and Oona. Brighid would look at the books that were there now and again in the evenings and think of what he might bring out of them.

There was "The History of Rome," by Doctor Goldsmith, with the mysterious story in the beginning, read long ago before she knew what it could mean, of the meeting of Rhea Silva with the man in armour, and the birth of the twins; then there was the story about the geese that cackled, and there was the one about the young man who put his hand into the fire to show how much he and the Romans could bear, and there was the story of the other young man who sprang, horse and all, into an opening in the ground, and there were the women who had been carried away from the feast—the Sabine women, and there was the statue that ran with blood when Caesar was killed. Then there was a play in verse about the last wars in Ireland—"The Battle of Aughrim." There was "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan," and "Paradise and the Peri," both with pictures of turbaned men with swords, and one with a pitying angel weeping. There was a volume of "The Lives of the Saints" that she did not like to read; it was about terrible severities and asceticisms; she read it sometimes after she had been at con-

fession. There were two books of Irish stories by Carleton—"The Poor Scholar," and "The Black Prophet," and then there were three novels with brightly printed covers and yellow backs—novels that reminded her mother of more wonderful accounts of the world that she had read in her girlhood. Then there was a book that she had to keep in an obscure place—"The Adventures of a Soldier of Fortune"; it was harmless, in troth, but her mother distrusted any book that had the word "adventure" in its title, and so Brighid kept this volume on the third shelf. Beside it was the weekly journal that used to come on Thursdays, with continued stories in it, and the news of the week, and articles on agriculture. The last book that Owen had brought her was there—"Under the Green Flag, a Tale of the American Civil War."

Now and again Francis Gillick would read to them out of some of these books. He took down the fiddle that Brighid had, but that she had not played since before Francis Gillick's coming; he played once or twice.

It was best of all, Brighid thought, when he was giving her words in Irish or in Latin. Getting the words from him was nice. It was like asking riddles—a fireside game. But when there were outside people in the house she and Francis would not be near each other, nor would he name for her the sod burning in the ashes and the bird crying in the air outside.

Francis Gillick would often wonder at himself—at himself sitting there, in the house so familiar and so endeared, with Brighid before him, her head

drooped, or with eyes wide and fixed on him; with Honor there, knitting or making crochet, and with Oona, very wakeful, or else nodding to sleep. He would often wonder at himself being there, and he would rub his hair and smile oddly before he stood up to see how things were in the byre outside.

CHAPTER XII

AT THE BED OF DERMOTT AND GRANIA

A DAY of a great many happenings came. First of all, there was an intimation the evening before that there was a letter for them in the Post Office at Eglish. This, no doubt, was the eagerly-awaited letter from Owen. Brighid would go for it; she would start early in the morning so as to be on the car with James Gilroy who would be driving back to his shop in that town.

Furthermore, Brighid was to make her first visit to Father Bartley Moynagh, her grand-uncle. This would be an event of great importance. She would go to the priest's house from the Post Office; she was not to stay on this occasion, for it was necessary to bring Owen's letter home with a certain despatch.

So Brighid started off early in the morning. Then Honor made herself ready for a journey. She had not mentioned her intention to Brighid, and she refused to disclose to Oona where she was going and what object she might have. She dressed herself in her silk dress, and she put on her new bonnet. Oona hadn't a notion of what her mother could be up to. There was a fascination in watching her dress in her best and walk down the bohereen with the garments of suspense upon her. Anything outside the house, or outside the circle of the neighbours' houses, or

outside the fields, was in the realm of fantasy for Oona. Her mother might have dressed herself to go see the blind sage who lived in the King of Ireland's castle. No matter whom she was to see her going was dramatic and eventful.

Francis Gillick was in the fields at the time, and Oona was left in the house all alone. It would be some time before she would begin to get ready a meal to take it to him. As she went here and there in the house her eyes came on the blue coat that was hanging on the harness rack behind the door. There were mud-stains on it. It was too bad to see Francis's coat spoiled like that! She took it down and brushed it hard. What were the things that were in the pockets? a bundle of newspapers in the inside one. She left the bundle there. Then there was a big, black covered note-book. She took this out and looked in it, holding it before her on the table.

There was big and little writing on the pages, but it was all strange to Oona, and she could make out only a few words. She rubbed the surface of its cover, and brightened its dull blackness.

Then Oona was startled by someone coming to the door. The visitor rapped, and that was unusual. She saw a face just above the half-door—a youngster, but none of the neighbours' youngsters—an odd, old-looking face this child had. Oona opened the door for her. Then she recognized the youngster—she belonged to the mysterious Baccachs—the wanderers who had the encampment along the lane that was off the bog-road.

"My mother sent me to ask you could you give me a sup of milk to bring them. The child is sick."

This was an apparition, and Oona put her hand to her heart that was beating. She had opened the door, however; the youngster came in.

"I'll give you a sup of milk," said Oona. "Did you bring anything to carry it in?"

"A bottle. Here it is."

Oona took a vessel, dipped it into the crock and poured the milk into the bottle. "The child's sick," said the youngster, "and my mother said that if you want anything from herself or from my grandmother she'll give it to you. We're Baccachs, and we have cures for everything."

"Won't you sit down and rest yourself?" said Oona.

The youngster was filled with curiosity about the house she had come into. "Have you a house at that side of the house, and a house at this side of the house too?" she asked, indicating the two rooms. Oona opened the door of the upper and the lower room and let her look in. She looked long at the presses and the beds.

"I never saw the like," she said, and then, "My name's Biddy. Have you ere a piece of bread?"

The baking of last night was wrapped in a clean cloth. Oona cut off a piece, put butter on it, and gave it to the Baccachs' youngster.

"Have you any children to mind?" she asked then.

"No," said Oona.

"How's that?" Biddy asked.

"My mother hasn't any more children," said Oona.

"I suppose your father's dead," said the youngster. "My mother told me to tell you she'll do anything for you for giving us the milk, for the child is sick. We've a cure for everything, and my grandmother has every charm there is." She went out of the house then, and Oona watched her go swiftly away—a faithful envoy, surely.

The mysterious Baccachs had "nature" in them, after all! They sent to get milk for a sick child. And they had it in them to be thankful, too! See what they promised for the sake of a sup of milk—the sup of milk and the bit of bread that you'd give to any beggar!

The meal was ready to take to Francis Gillick. Oona started off with it. On the bog-road she met Nannie Gilroy's brother who was going to the very place that Francis was working in. He offered to take Oona's burden. And Oona, who had some anxiety about the empty house, let him take it, and turned to go back. However, she couldn't refrain from looking up the laneway that the Baccachs were in occupation of. Biddy spied her. She shouted to someone else, and then a woman appeared. She regarded Oona. Biddy came to her and took her to where they were settled.

They all surrounded Oona, the children, the woman, the man, while the awe-inspiring blind grandmother peered at her. The woman showed the child who was ill; it was now drinking the milk out of a handleless cup. Oona was made very much at home by the Baccachs; the woman and the man

showed a great interest in her, and Biddy smiled wisely on her, but all the same she had a feeling that she was being brought into a rather terrible companionship. She stayed just as short a time as possible. Then she hurried back to the empty house.

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Oona was before the house, calling "yebb, yebb, yebb," to the young turkeys when Francis Gillick came up in the late afternoon; she told him that her mother had dressed herself in her best and had gone from the house. And Brighid? Now would be the time to go meet Brighid, Oona said. She would be on her way back if she had not made a long stay at Father Bartley's. "And only I've to fend for the young turkeys I'd go meet her on the road," Oona said. "She'll surely be on her way back now, and I could meet her at Dermott and Grania's Bed."

"It would be the very place to meet her," said Francis Gillick.

He left the spade against the wall of the house and he started off. The road to Eglish where the post office was, was long. Half-way back there was a short cut that went through the fields. The path went past a cromlech that was named, as other cromlechs in other parts of the country are named, "The Bed of Dermott and Grania."

The cromlech stood in a very remote place. Upon three stones an immense mass of rock was placed; two of the uprights were sunken, but still the whole monument stood so high that cattle were able to

take shelter under the covering stone. There were horses grazing on the wild strip around it.

He stood on the top stone to look out for her. And then he saw her coming along. He called to her, standing on the cromlech. She was startled and stopped; then she came quickly, for the surprise was the best sort of one.

How well the meeting had befallen! Just through the luck of Honor being away and Oona mentioning where he would be likely to meet her! They were delighted. They kissed; they stood together under the great stone. How safe they were there! How close they could keep together. "We could hide here like the two who rested behind us," he said.

"Who were them two?" she asked.

"Dermott and Grania. Grania was the girl who was to marry Finn, and she and her sweetheart—"

"Did she go away from the king she was to marry?"

"She did. She ran away with her own sweetheart, Dermott. And they were chased through the length and breadth of Ireland by Finn MacCumhal and his men."

"Don't tell me they were overtaken."

"They were. But they were a long time together before that."

"And what happened to them then?"

"Dermott was killed. And Grania married Finn after a while."

"So that's the story of the pair. Their bed it is called. Did they really sleep here—that girl and that young man?"

She laughed at her boldness, drawing her shawl across her face.

His lips were on her fair soft neck; he felt the beat of her blood, the stir of her breast. They were standing under the high stone and in the place where the cattle had trampled. "Brighid, Brighid," he cried. Even as he felt and divined the body held in his arms he knew her for his trust, his devotion, for a being revered. "There now," she said, when they had kissed over and over again.

Clasping his hand she drew him from out that enclosure. "You have my ring, Brighid?" he asked.

"Wait now." She turned aside and began to draw at something that was at her neck. That was what had touched her breast. It was an *agnus-dei*; she broke the string, leaving in her hand the pious, heart-shaped symbol. She broke the stitches and showed the ring in her hand.

"Wasn't it wise of me to think of bestowing it there?" she said. "I can wear it at my neck and nobody knows—not even Oona, and she sleeping beside me."

"Now I can put it on your finger."

He had not been able to put it on her finger before; he had only slipped the ring to her. Now she held out her hand and he put the ring on her finger. They were away from the cromlech now; they went and sat on a rise of the ground.

Then they went on talking of affairs that concerned them. Francis Gillick spoke of what Oona had reported—her mother going from the house, dressed so remarkably. Brighid could not guess what business brought her mother out. "I often

think," said Francis Gillick, "that your mother will sometime want someone different from me about the place."

"And who could she get that would be near as good as you?" said Brighid. "There's no one but young Michael Paralon, and he's not much good—a young fellow that goes out every night, and that has no care for anything but to be sporting himself."

They talked about the letter she had got at the post office—the letter from Owen. His shop was open now and business was beginning. That Owen would approve of Francis—any plan they had was founded on this hope. But another support seemed possible to Brighid since the visit she had made that day.

She had much to tell Francis about Father Bartley Moynagh. The visit to him was of great consequence. She was sure her grand-uncle was going to be fond of her. And if he got to know Francis and to like him that would be the best thing that could happen. But Francis Gillick was doubtful about a support founded on Father Moynagh's liking of him. Priests never would approve of him—they would always remember that he was a doubtful person—neither cleric nor lay. Father Bartley, Brighid said, was strong for sailors; he had a photograph of himself taken in sailor's clothes; he had had a mission to sailors in Liverpool, in England. So he and Francis might talk of the sea and of ships together. And he was wonderfully nice and good. She had tea with him, and he had talked about her father for whom he cared greatly. She was going to see him soon again.

They were talking in low voices, sitting together on a rise of the ground. Some sound made them look towards the cromlech. There, on the covering stone, was Oona; she was on her knees, and there was a stricken look on her face. Francis went towards her; Oona drew away, and lay on the surface of the stone.

"Oona! Did anything happen?" he cried.

She seemed shaken as with sobs. She crawled backwards. She dropped from the stone and ran away.

"Was she there long, do you think, Brighid?" he asked. Brighid was in dismay.

"Hush, now, until I think. If she heard what we said about the ring!—But she could not have heard that. She wasn't on the stone then. I looked when we came from under it. She climbed up to look out for me. She saw us in a minute—us two sitting there. And we looked and saw her then." She said no more for a while, and then she said, "Oona is fond of you herself. She has a wild heart."

"Will I run after her?" he asked.

"Wait now. She came to wait for me, I suppose.

She did not hear us talk—she only saw us. God knows what she thought. No, she was not there long—no more than a minute. Go after her, Francis. I'll come slowly."

Francis Gillick went on. Oona went running before him. Three times she looked around, and each time after she made flight like a wild bird. But when they were nearing the house she let him catch up on her. She broke away again and ran into the house.

When Brighid came they found that she had hidden herself.

And so, as between the three, things were in disarray when Honor came back, her grand dress upon her. Oona came and sat quietly while Brighid read the letter she had had from Owen. Then she told about the reception Father Bartley had given her. Next day Brighid was able to talk with Oona. It was plain that she herself hardly knew why she had been agitated. She said that it seemed to her that Francis was telling Brighid that he was going away and that she had become lonely. Maybe it was an unlucky thing to be near the stones that were left by giants and witches. Anyway, she did not know what had come over her.

Still, Oona's presence and the memory of her agitation created something that remained between Brighid and Francis Gillick. They could not any more accept and prolong the casual intimacies of the house; those halcyon times were over now, and there was the beginning of a wind.

CHAPTER XIII

AGAIN CASTLE CONQUER

MARTIN JORDAN kept coming to the house: now and again he had been in to pick up scraps of tobacco that had been around since Owen's farewell party. While he was around Honor kept in the room: she had not let herself be accosted by that slouching old man for a good many days.

One day when Francis Gillick and Brighid were in the house together Oona came in with an exciting story. Did they know the strange hound that used to follow Jonathan Woulfe—the big, grey, shaggy hound? Well, it had strayed into Martin Jordan's cabin, and it was staying around. Wasn't that a sign of something very strange?

Honor, coming in, heard Oona's report and inquiry. She thought it was a sign that was very easily read. When a hound like that came into a house it was a sign that its master was about to take possession. Of course, it was not Jonathan Woulfe, but Judkin de Courcey who would take possession of Martin Jordan's house and land. But in this case master and man were one.

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Later in the day Martin Jordan himself came in.

Oona found a scrap of tobacco for him: he took it and smoked but his eyes remained spiritless all the time. Brighid brought him a cup of tea; he drank it, but still he remained silent, sighing as he sat looking into the fire. Then he got up and wandered out.

"I declare to goodness I can see the bag on his back," Oona said as she looked after him. And indeed the old man as he went from the house had the gait and look of a beggar-man.

He had talked uneasily about the hound that had stayed around his house. Brighid now said that it would be a charity to take Jonathan Woulfe's hound away from the cabin. Francis Gillick was mending the harness as he sat near the table, and she looked at him. It would be a charity, she repeated. And she went on to say that Jonathan Woulfe was known to be fond of this hound of his, and that if it was brought back from Martin Jordan's, the steward might be inclined to give the old man 'law.' By 'law' she meant a stay in the process of ejectment that was hanging over Martin Jordan.

He told Brighid that he would take the hound to Castle Conquer. The next day was an idle day and he would go. He said nothing to Honor about it.

The next day he went round to Martin Jordan's. The hound was still prowling about the place—a big, shaggy, broad-headed hound. Francis Gillick coaxed it to him and got a leash on it.

Within, the old man sat by the ashes of the hearth. His cheeks were sunken and his face was very care-worn. Francis Gillick told him that he planned to take the hound to Jonathan Woulfe; he would try to get 'law' for him from the steward.

The old man by the ashes was astonished at Francis's offering to do this; no one else about the place would go to the landlord's following on such an errand. "If I had a while of 'law,' " he said, "I might have something from my son Peter in America." There was some hopefulness in his eyes as he spoke. Francis Gillick filled a pipe for him and put it into his hand.

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He had faced Kiernan Mulcahy and the four men who would have him bring them into the Clann Melidh on the floor of this cabin. That meeting had been arranged for on the day he had left Honor Paralon's on Luke Leonard's order. He had faced them here while the old man lay in the bed, but he had declined to take them into the Clann.

He had attended the meeting that Luke Leonard had given him the summons for. He did not know it at the time, but that meeting had another tendency beside the one that he and Luke Leonard had considered: the chiefs of the organization were at variance now; some were for a return to a military policy; others were for making the meeting a preparation for the appearance of an imposing political figure who would speak in favor of amnesty for the members of the Clann who were in prison for long terms for political offences.

Francis Gillick was ordered to go into the British Army and make recruits amongst the Irish soldiers for the Clann Melidh. He took the order and he was then told that he was to go see another of the

head men. He crossed a street and went into another house.

Luke Leonard was at a table writing. There was a big man there also—a commanding man, with a black and bushy beard. He was standing at the window, looking out into the street.

"I want to know," said Francis Gillick, "who I am to keep in touch with while I'm in the British Army."

"What's that?" asked the black-bearded man, turning around.

Luke Leonard explained. This was a "B" man; he was going into the British Army to recruit there.

"We won't sanction it at all," said the bearded man authoritatively. He turned his back on them and looked out of the window.

"The Council is thinking of other plans," said Luke Leonard.

"And we won't sanction that plan of yours," said the bearded man.

"He could do good work in the British Army," Luke Leonard asserted.

"It's folly—that's what it is—the height of folly," said the other. "Here we are trying to get our men out of gaols—men that are rotting there—and then they'd have us send a man like this into the British Army. This young man would be up before the adjutant in two days. There would be a howl from the whole of England, and we'd never again get a hearing on the prisoners' account."

"Are we going to forbid his going in?" asked Luke Leonard.

"I don't say but I would."

"Well, we'll hear more about not being able to make revolutions with rose-water," said Luke Leonard bitterly.

"Let them make revolutions with stirabout. Let him go and swear in men in his own district."

"There are other men that will do that."

It was evident that the bearded man's whole day had been spent in making protests. Now Francis Gillick's standing there became for him a stupidity that he was too weary to protest against. He waved him away. "Go and do as you were told," said he, "but for God's sake, don't get caught doing anything until we get a few of them out."

Francis Gillick went out of that house, wondering greatly. He would not be in Honor Paralon's for long after his return, he thought. And because his departure was imminent he felt he could not enlist the men he met in this cabin on the night of Owen Paralon's going—Kiernan Mulcahy and the three men from Monamore.

"You can do what you like, but we won't sanction your doings," said the bearded man.

"The only thing I want to say is that I'm ready to go wherever I'm sent," said Francis Gillick.

"That's the spirit. We'll remember you," said the bearded man. Luke Leonard seemed abashed by it all. He bent his head over the papers as Francis Gillick went out of the room.

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He was not a revered individual, this Martin

Jordan, this man on whose account he was again making a journey to Castle Conquer. He had light blue eyes, a hanging mouth, and a grey beard that carried no claims to honorable consideration. His stories were still bawdy. He and his wife quarrelled and separated, and this made him and her people apart. He had no daughters, and his sons were badly brought up: three of them had gone to America years before, and the fourth, who was thought to be good natured but a little simple, went last Autumn. The first three had never sent him anything—not even a line to say that they had met each other. This was a grievance that Martin Jordan made much of. The fourth said when he was going: “You’ll get from me what you never got from the others.” This was Peter from whom the old man had hopes of hearing.

Francis Gillick looked back from the road along which he was now going. The hound held in the leash went on before him. He saw Martin Jordan go totteringly about the green field that was on the hillside. His cabin was below. Practically the whole of Martin Jordan’s farm was on the side of the hill, and its ten acre area was like a dish laid on the ground. Around it were bits of grazing land that Mark Bohoon had acquired; below it was the small field that was owned by Honor Paralon.

There was no party or person to hold him on the road, no Hugh Jinks with his vagabond clann, no Sylvester Simm. He came upon Paddy Sharkey, the fool, who was shuffling along, and passed him. But Paddy Sharkey called to him, and Francis stood and

waited. The fool still held to the cow's horn. "Where you going?" he asked. "To Castle Conquer," said Francis Gillick. "Oh, then, be sure to tell this to Judkin de Courcey—

They must leave off their renting and racking of
acres,
Or we'll burn them as brown as loaves at the
bakers;
We'll crop off their ears if they don't have a care,
As they do with the calves in the County Kildare.

"Tell him that, will you?" Francis Gillick shook his head and went on, leaving the fool muttering thick-tongued to himself.

He went in through the battlemented gate. There, under the dark yew tree, was Judkin de Courcey's wife. She was waiting for the groom who was now coming down the drive holding two riding-horses. Mrs. de Courcey had on a riding-habit and a hat with a drooping feather. She called to Jonathan Woulfe's hound, and Francis Gillick, holding the leash, stood before her; she gave no sign of recognition. What he noticed about her now was a sort of hard playfulness—as if she could stand there for long and have the hound snap and snatch at things she would draw away, and lash him for snapping and snatching.

He went on and met the groom who was bringing the mounts to the gate—a hard-featured, sullen-looking young man who was Jonathan Woulfe's son. He looked back and he saw her mount her horse between the dark tree and the heavy tower of the

gateway; she rode under the buttressed arch, the groom following her.

And now the hound drew Francis Gillick off the driveway and along a path that evidently went to its master's house.

The house that the steward lived in had signs of squalor—one of the windows had a dirty red curtain drawn across it and the other was lacking in a number of panes. The room in which he saw him was squalid—the papers and ruler on the table, the porter bottle and the unemptied glass gave a sense of mean business and solitary indulgence. On the floor tufts of hair were scattered—Jonathan Woulfe had had his hair clipped by some handy-man, and as yet no one had been round to sweep up.

There was one remarkable piece of furniture in the room—a mahogany dressing-table surmounted by a large, dusty mirror. If Jonathan Woulfe ever had the wish to look at himself he would have beheld an extraordinary figure in that mirror: the hump on his back was conspicuous, and above it, on his neck, there was a big wen. But there was something commanding in his frame; there was some passion and courage in his eyes. At the moment he was wearing a quilted dressing-jacket with epaulets and braids across it; the sleeves were tattered, and the coat was torn in a few places. The hound that Francis Gillick had brought did not seem disposed to greet its master when he appeared: it bounded towards a kennel when Francis Gillick unloosed it.

“What can I do for you?” said Jonathan Woulfe.

For some reason his Spanish came uppermost,

and Francis Gillick said something in that language about the hound he had brought.

"What did you say? You spoke in a foreign language?"

"Espagnol."

"Spanish? I thought it was Spanish. It is not exactly like the Latin or the Italian. Are you a man of education?"

"I was in the College in Salamanca in Spain."

"Ah, the Roman Catholic Seminary."

"They call it the College of the Irish Nobles."

"I know of it. I presume you are going to be a priest."

"No."

"You are evidently an unusual man. What did you want to say to me?"

"I brought back the hound that I thought was yours."

Jonathan Woulfe's eyes became nervous. He had the embarrassment of a penniless traveller for whom a porter does a favor. "I hardly know anything about the hound—he comes and goes." Then he added, "Be sure I'll remember about you, young man. If a cow, or a horse, or any beast belonging to you is impounded, come to me about it. I shall do something to have the charges remitted."

"It was another man who took all the trouble about the hound," Francis Gillick said. "I want to let you know about him. He is a man by the name of Martin Jordan. You might be able to do something for him, sir—perhaps you could get Mr. de Courcey to give him more time to make up his rent."

"I can do nothing, young man," said Jonathan

Woulfe. "Mr. de Courcey reserves such matters entirely to himself. I know it is his intention to get a better tenant than this Martin Jordan."

"He may have trouble in getting any tenant at all if he puts Martin Jordan out."

"Let me tell you that you, as an educated man, ought to know that it is extremely improper to come here and utter such threats. Also it is dangerous for you to do so—extremely dangerous."

"I don't think that Mr. de Courcey has any right to turn a man out of the house that his father built, and out of the land that he and his father worked on."

"I would remind you as an educated man that Mr. de Courcey has all the rights of ownership in the land around here."

"And can the people who work the land never own the land?"

"I shall answer that question, young man. I shall answer it, not as a bailiff, but as an educated man—a man speaking as one who has studied the whole question deeply." Upon the dressing-table some tattered books were piled. Jonathan Woulfe went to the dressing-table and he took up one of the books.

"I am, young man," he said, "a Master of Arts of our celebrated University. Those who know my attainments might expect to find me in an ampler abode. However, we are all subject to misfortune, and that which proved the grave of Maginn and Burns brought me to this—I do not hesitate to say—miserable abode."

Then he began to speak with warmth and re-

markable conviction. "The whole of what we call civilized society would be destroyed if the families that worked on the land owned the land. What would happen? There would be no emigration in the first place—no movement of people. Each family would settle down to till its few roods. Perhaps they would make enough to support life. But surely civilization means more than food and shelter! We want universities and colleges. We want libraries. We want fine buildings to elevate the mind. These would not be possible if landowners did not accumulate riches. We need a spending class and an earning class. But I must not leave out of account the most important function of all—the function of government. How should tenant-farmers be able to take large views about the government of the country? You know as well as I do that everything in Ireland, from the repair of the public roads to the proclamations of the Privy Council, is done by the landowning class."

"In their own interest, the people say," said Francis Gillick.

"In their own interest and in the country's interest," said Jonathan Woulfe firmly. "And let us come to another point. The wide space you see around is free from cultivation. It is not necessary to plant on it what will merely yield food for its produce. It can be used for a purpose which would never enter the peasant mind. No, only one liberated from the peasant's daily task could see what I can see from this."

He strode to the window, and, holding up the squalid curtain, looked out. "I never look in that

direction," he said, "but I see banks of rhododendrons—giant roses brought from afar and making masses of color here. And on this side I see fish-ponds whose supplies recruit our depleted rivers. Over there is a level space rich in nourishing grass and with abundance of clear water. It is an ideal place for a stud-farm. And I want to remind you, young man, that in her horses Ireland has great possibilities, and a stud-farm such as I see could make an improvement in our famous horses. Then sheep and goats. A class of sheep and goats could be bred here as would improve the impoverished stock kept by the tenant-farmers around—one might get better wool, better meat, better milk. And all this, observe, because one man is not forced to exhaust a little plot of ground for a mere meal of potatoes." He came over to Francis Gillick. "You will say that the things I speak of are not here. But even if they were never to be here my argument would not be made invalid, for I am speaking, not of a particular case, but of a general tendency. What I have mentioned are some of the possibilities that come from private and instructed ownership of large tracts of land. But nothing can be done—bear this in mind—nothing can be done until agitations and outrages cease. I could show you," he said quickly, "I could show you how landowners are handicapped by the defences they have to put up against these agitations and outrages."

With Jonathan Woulfe's voice he heard another voice—a rich, throaty voice—saying sentences that confuted what the steward said. He was going to repeat one of these sentences. But suddenly the

afflatus went from Jonathan Woulfe. He walked about the room like a man vexed and impatient. His hand went out to the glass on the table. He stopped. He looked at Francis Gillick with a frown.

"What more can I do for you, young man?"

"I don't want you to do anything for me."

"Why, then, are you taking up my time?"

"All I wanted to do was to bring back your dog and to recommend to you the man who took care of it—Martin Jordan."

"Very well. But I want to tell you that nothing that was done for the dog or for myself can possibly be let come before the interests of my employer—Mr. Judkin de Courcey. I must ask you to go now."

He held open the door and Francis Gillick went out. As he passed the window he saw the steward with his head thrown back and the glass held to his mouth. He stopped to recollect words that confused what Jonathan Woulfe had been saying.

* * * * *

He stood in the street of the town, biting into a hard apple. He would be sent away from Brighid; he would be sent to England or Scotland, Malta or Gibraltar. He kept the misery of separation away from him while he thought about what he would say to Owen and what he would say to Brighid.

Before leaving the town he had gone into an eating-house. Sitting down at the table he pondered for a long time, made numb sometimes by the notion

that he was walking from the sunlight into a gaol. A man who sat facing him dropped a pass-word; Francis Gillick soon entered into conversation with him.

Had he been dressed differently this man would have looked like a pig-jobber; he had a blotched face, a heavy jowl and narrow eyes. But he was well-dressed and he had a ring on his finger. Peter-Paul Hovey, as it came out, was this man's name. He was a commercial traveller.

After hearing the pass-word Francis Gillick remarked that he had not seen his good friend at the meeting. The man opposite said that he didn't want to go into it. He had come to the town on business, but he had known that the meeting was on. He spoke in a rich sort of voice, and he had a manner that was guarded and confidential.

"Do you know what I'm going to tell you? When you see the Clann getting anything done you'll see a blue cuckoo. I made a proposal to the men who are supposed to be the leaders, and I didn't get even thank-you for it! What do they think they want? A Republic! They'll never get the grey-coats to follow them for that."

By the grey-coats he meant the small farmers and the small farmers' sons. The man went on talking and eating in a way that Sancho Panza was warned against—with both sides of his mouth.

"They want to overthrow the British Government in Ireland," he went on. "Very well. But the British Government has forty thousand men here, and they're drilled and armed, and inside their fortifications. The Clann, you'll say, will swing

round the Irish soldiers in the British Army. Well and good. But as soon as the British Government knows that the Irish regiments are disaffected they'll send them——" He made a sweeping gesture with his arm.

This outside criticism was a revelation of an enormous menace. Francis Gillick leaned forward to hear what more this man had to say.

"You might as well try to throw the Galtee Mountain into the sea," he went on. "Now," said he, "you'll ask what plan I have. Well, it's not a plan of my own. I wanted them to work along the lines that Fintan Lalor proposed."

"I don't know him at all," said Francis Gillick.

"He's dead, my boy. He was dead before the Clann was started. He's dead this thirty years. It's his writings I'm thinking about." He gobbled a piece of greasy meat, and then he said, "None of the leaders will draw Fintan Lalor's writings into the discussion. They don't know them in the first place. And in the second place they think that they're going to get the Irish landlords' sons to fight for a republic. They will—when pigs fly."

He did not know enough to challenge his statements, so Francis Gillick remained looking at the man in silence. Besides, what was being said to him was altogether outside the world that his thought was now plunged into. He shook his head and said, "I never saw Fintan Lalor's writings."

"No, you didn't," the man before him remarked, "and maybe you never will. They're in a few scarce journals." He picked his teeth, and told the waiter in a guarded way to bring him a large bottle of

porter. He had the manner of a man who had something to impart, but who would be slow and important about it. "I saw Lalor once," he went on. "He was a hunchback. He spoke to a dozen of us in a room. The rest didn't believe in what he said, but I believed in it. They put him in gaol after that for something he wrote. Needless to say they were in no hurry to let him out. They kept him there till he was ready for his death."

Francis Gillick became interested in the figure that the man had presented. A man with a gospel that one person evidently believed in! A hunchback brought near to his death by imprisonment! And by his very ordinariness the man who spoke was able to draw Francis Gillick away from his absorbing thought.

"I never saw his writings," he repeated.

"They're in this bag," said the man, putting his hand on a worn and bulging receptacle. He waited for a while. A man who had lighted his pipe went out of the eating-house. Then Peter-Paul Hovey, the commercial traveller, opened his bag; at the bottom were some slender journals stitched in a brown paper cover and rolled up.

He took them out and put them on the table. Marking certain passages with a stumpy, black-nailed finger he turned the pages. Some lines and passages were cast into Francis Gillick's mind then.

"If the Clann meant business," said Peter-Paul Hovey, "it would print four hundred thousand copies of Lalor's writings and send them amongst the tenant-farmers of Ireland. Just read this! 'I hold and maintain that the entire soil of a country

belongs of right to the entire people of that country, and is the rightful property, not of any one class, but of the nation at large, in full effective possession, to let to whom they will.' "

The statement seemed abstract to Francis Gillick, but he noticed that it was very satisfactory to the man who had shown it to him. "Four hundred thousand copies amongst the tenant-farmers! Think of it, man! I proposed that very thing myself, and I didn't get thank-you for it. They don't know the grey-coats."

He stood up. "I'm going out to get shaved now," he said, "but I'll trust you if you want to look at the papers while I'm in the barber's." He took up his bag and said: "Any of our crowd that know about Fintan Lalor at all will tell you that Lalor couldn't get the tenant-farmers to follow him. That's true too. They didn't know what would save them. But it's my opinion they've learnt a lesson, and they're not going to come face to face with a famine again." Maybe that was so, Francis Gillick said, assenting. "You needn't say anything about it till I send a letter to the papers," said the owner of the journals facing him. "I did send one, but they told me it was too long to publish." He left the journals to him and went out abruptly and guardedly.

He had finished his meal and he was ready to go now, but he waited on to restore the journals to the man who prized them so greatly. And while he waited he read through them, and some passages that were marked entered into his mind. . . . "Food is our first want, to procure it our first work. The agricultural class, therefore, must precede and

provide for every other." He read in another place: "A dissolution of the social system has taken place. . . . There was no outrise or revolt against it. It was borne for ages with beggarly patience, until it perished by the irritation of God in the order of Nature." This was about the famine, Francis Gillick knew, the famine, the misery and beggary of which still affected the children and grandchildren of those who had been through it.

But it was for others to think of this, not for him. He might write down some passages from the journals and send them to Luke Leonard or Kiernan Mulcahy. He wrote some sentences in a big, black-covered note-book that he carried. And all the time he was expecting the return of the gospeller of their contents.

Peter-Paul Hovey, however, did not return. That cautious man as he went outside was identified by a police sargeant as having been present at a proclaimed meeting in the district. He was arrested there and then. But the watchers were themselves watched; as soon as the arrest was made there was someone to warn the man whom the arrested one had been with. Francis Gillick heard of it; he put his note-book and the journals into the wide inside pocket of his blue coat. He went to where his horse was, mounted, and rode out of the town.

* * * * *

And now sentences he had read were there; they were in his mind and ready to spring out and confute what Jonathan Woulfe had said. They became

more insistent, and he felt like going back to deliver himself of them. But he would go on his way, and would see no more of the steward. He was going towards the gate that was near to the village of Monamore.

On his way he had an adventure. Two fellows who were keeping up a sort of guard challenged him; one of them had a truncheon, the other had a gun.

"Stop there! Where are you going?"

"To Monamore."

"We won't let you go this way."

"Stop talking to him, Knocker," said the one with the truncheon. "Stop talking to him. If you have a charge in that gun, give it to him for the love of Heaven."

"Wait now, Pucks; wait now."

Then another combatant came on. This was the great hound that Francis Gillick had brought back to Jonathan Woulfe. Evidently the hound disliked the under-bailiffs. It sprang at the one who was called Pucks.

"Mind me," shouted the fellow who was pinned by the hound. "Mind me, but shoot the God-damned dog."

"I'll shoot it, by God I will, and I'll make the lad pay for it," said the one who was called "The Knocker." If there had been two charges in the gun it is likely he would have given one to Francis Gillick. The one that was in the barrel was for the hound. But the man had difficulty in getting the hound clear of the man whom the hound had pinned.

Then Jonathan Woulfe came along. "Call off

your dog, Mr. Woulfe," The Knocker growled. "He'll ate Pucks here. Call off your dog."

Jonathan Woulfe put his hand on its collar and drew the hound away. Pucks was more frightened than hurt. "The man was going to fire on me," said Francis Gillick.

"These men have to protect themselves and protect this property," said Jonathan Woulfe. Then he said to one of the under-bailiffs, "Don't let me hear of your making any unprovoked attack."

"All right, my lord," said Pucks.

"You see another instance of the handicap I spoke of," said Jonathan Woulfe to Francis Gillick, "this necessity for defence. Keep these instances in your mind, young man, and consider what the landowners might do if they had not to busy their minds with such defences."

"Mankind will yet be master of the earth," said Francis Gillick, repeating a sentence that Peter-Paul Hovey had read out to him.

"Eh?" said Jonathan Woulfe.

"The people," said Francis Gillick, as he turned around, "have to pay for these police."

"Three shillings and sixpence a day for each man," said Jonathan Woulfe. "In this country it is high pay. It shows what the government is prepared to do to uphold the social order. You are an educated young man, and I would advise you to keep these instances in mind when you hear recommendations towards violence and intimidation."

"It looks," said Francis Gillick, "as if there was war between Castle Conquer and the village of Monamore."

"There is a kind of war," said Jonathan Woulfe.

"Why should there be?" said Francis Gillick.

"Swift has said 'Rich states are commonly proud, and poor states are commonly hungry, and between pride and hunger there is perpetual enmity.' " Having delivered this maxim, Jonathan Woulfe marched back, and entered the gate of the demesne.

Pride and Hunger! A perpetual enmity? It was not racial ambition after all, nor the memory of racial conflicts that would lead to struggle, and through struggle to the re-conquest! It would be Hunger against Pride. He looked at the walls that swept around the good lands of the demesne, and then at the village that was huddled at the other side of the stream. A poor village it was, huddled upon boggy and rocky land, the good land having been enclosed by the sweeping walls. Pride and Hunger! Henceforth, he told himself, he would be on the side of the hungry.

CHAPTER XIV

AN EVANGEL

FRANCIS GILLICK, when he got back, found a new-comer at the house—young Michael Paralon, who had been his predecessor as a helper in Honor's household.

Young Michael Paralon frankly regarded Francis Gillick as a wild man; he grinned and shouted when he saw him coming up the bohereen. The youth kept bending down to the hearth every few minutes to light and re-light his pipe. It seemed that he had taken to smoking lately; while at his father's he still went into the barn or byre to have a pull at his pipe; at Honor's he smoked very conspicuously.

He had been asked over to help in a few days' work, to help with the turf-cutting that had been delayed, and to help to get home what turf was already dried in the bog. The young man kept doing noticeable things. It was a holy day, but that did not prevent his getting a bill-hook and slashing at the tops of the green hedges. He left off cutting at the hedge-tops to follow Brighid down to the well. Francis Gillick, when he came to the house, had very much the sense that there was now another occupant.

Afterwards Oona took Michael Paralon into both rooms to view the silhouettes of Brighid and herself that Francis had made. The youth was made even

more contemptuous by the sight of such accomplishment. "I suppose you learnt that when it failed them to learn you what you went for," he said.

They were all in the kitchen, and Brighid began to peel and grate raw potatoes to make boxty. This gave young Michael a cue for singing a local song—

The Lismore girls, their eyes are red,
Blowing the fire for the boxty-bread.

Francis Gillick watched Brighid. Already he had managed to speak to her about his seeing Jonathan Woulfe and had told her how hopeless it was for Martin Jordan. Now as he watched her he wondered when he would be able to tell her what had come into his mind. Pride and Hunger! The words he had read in the eating-house when his mind was filled with the thought of separation from her came back to him now, and came back to him with power. She sat with a basin before her, peeling potatoes, grating them, straining the potato-paste, mixing it with flour and kneading it into a cake. She was silent and listening, and when she came near the fire she gave him a look that showed him she was on her guard.

Young Michael Paralon declared his enthusiasm for boxty-bread for supper. He was even more enthusiastic about boxty for breakfast. That was the stuff that would put a lad in fettle for his work! He was going to show the boy over there what work was really like when he had him out in the bog in the morning!

He rattled on, telling Honor anecdote after

anecdote about his village, telling all about the Paralons, lighting and re-lighting his pipe, singing bits of ballads for Oona, putting his arm around Brighid when she came near where he sat. Supper came on, and they ate smoking boxty with fried bacon. Michael became even more exuberant after the meal; he wanted Brighid to walk out with him. And if she wouldn't walk out she should go with him to a *celidh* or a dance somewhere. Brighid wouldn't go. She and Francis looked at each other, and they decided that this was an evening for a lesson of some kind. He put down his pencil and some paper on the table and she came over to him.

Michael Paralon watched and shrugged and let his pipe go out while Francis Gillick wrote down words, and Brighid, standing by his chair and looking over his shoulder, repeated a word or a sentence. Honor was not in sympathy with the pair. Brighid felt this at once and she hardly engaged herself in the lesson; Francis Gillick was soon to feel it. Her mother disliked any tokens of familiarity between them with Michael Paralon by. What news he would bring back to the Paralons! That Honor's daughter was being said and led by a half-wit lad!

Her defense was to enter into a conversation with Michael Paralon that came to be concerned with the dignity and exclusiveness of her own family. "I used to see the father of Judkin de Courcey come to this door, and call my father out to him," Honor went on in her pride. "I often saw him lay the bag with all the silver and gold in it—the silver and gold that the people had paid him for their rents—on the wheelbarrow, and get my father to wheel it for

him, aye, up to the castle, with the two of them walking the five miles of the road together."

Neither he nor Brighid were engaged in the lesson. Now Francis Gillick pushed away the notebook from him and stood up. Michael Paralon caught the odd gleam that was in his eye.

"Sit down, boy, sit down," he said. "Sure you've no business out to-night."

"That was before the famine time," Honor went on, for she paid no attention to the movement of her working-guest.

He felt a resentment that had an edge from what he had seen that day—or perhaps a resentment that was edged by what Honor was saying. There was Castle Conquer, the under-bailiffs who had threatened him, Jonathan Woulfe, the words that came back to him at Jonathan Woulfe's challenge, and here was Honor with a complacency—a wilful, challenging complacency—about it all.

"The world knows that before the famine there were eight million people in Ireland. There are only half of them here now," he muttered.

"They died of hunger. But what could be done when the potatoes rotted away?" said Honor, her complacency unruffled.

"They wouldn't have died of hunger or fever, or they wouldn't have been swept out to America—I saw their graves in Canada by the hundreds—if the rents hadn't been paid. It was because they sold their stock and their corn, and gave the money to the landlords that they died."

"What are you talking about, Francis Gillick?" asked Honor.

"I'm talking about the famine, ma'am."

"You're talking about what you heard people talking about. But I saw famine. Maybe you saw people gathering nettles amongst stones, and skinning and eating crows in bad times since, and thought that that was famine. I saw my comrade-girls—the loveliest girls that ever were—dying of fever—aye, and in ditches, too. I saw good men with mouths on them that you wouldn't like to remember. Well, no matter. Some survived through it all—one famine, and then another at the heel of it." She bent over the fire, making marks in the ashes with a stick.

"There should have been full and plenty in the house you were reared in, ma'am," said Michael Paralon.

"No matter for that, either," said Honor. "What we had we made go far."

"I was saying," said Francis Gillick, "that the people then had no right to pay their rents."

"Didn't Daniel O'Connell advise the people to pay their rents?"

"God forgive him, then."

"What words are you saying, in the name of God?"

"Arrah, it's time someone spoke out the truth! Didn't your father send away his corn, and his pigs, and his calves, and left his children with only the yellow meal from America—maybe with only a cup-full of yellow porridge in a day? God forgive him, and forgive every man in Ireland that did the same! Look at us now! There isn't a man hereabouts that has the spirit to pass the landlord's agent's

house—let alone the landlord's—with his voice raised high. Even a drunken man coming home from the fair will go quietly past the agent's house! It's all because they're slaves—people that men like old de Courcey could call out of their houses to wheel away the wealth they had gathered up from the people."

"And do you stand under my roof, Francis Gillick, and say that? Remember that no one belonging to me was of the breed of people that broke and run. We were steady people, paying our rent steady. The landlord always got his dues from us, no matter how high they might be. Judkin de Courcey's father. . . ."

"I tell you that people will wonder that a man like your father would have made himself a porter for de Courcey's gains."

Brighid was troubled by the dispute that was growing so passionate and so bitter. She tried to draw Francis's attention to her, but now he was facing Honor.

"The Government's the people that sent soldiers into Ireland and conquered it from us. They gave our land to the men we call landlords now. They set them up here to keep us down. One of the ways they have of keeping us down is to keep us in poverty. They do that well enough by taking a good share of what we make by working on the land. But they couldn't do that if we all joined together to fight them. It looks as if we'll never do that. Take old Martin Jordan——"

In Honor there came a rigidity and a tension. Then she made a gesture of anger.

"He's under sentence to be put away from his house and his land—the house his father built and the land that they say that his father cleared from stones and whin-bushes. The people around here won't feel it very much if they see his walls levelled. But isn't he one of their own? Isn't he another Irishman put out to die on the road or in the poor-house?"

"I've listened to you long enough, Francis Gillick, and I know you now for what you are. Well, I want to tell you that no one ever talked as a White-boy or a Ribbonman beside my hearth, though the people I came from were as staunch and as true as any in Ireland. I don't want to hear more from you. And, though I'm sorry to say it, your bed won't be in this house to-night."

"Don't say such a thing, mother," Brighid cried. But Honor stood there seemingly relentness. Oona, bewildered, came to Francis Gillick. He went from them and took down the blue coat that was hanging on the harness-rack. Brighid called after him; he turned to her, and then went out. He would sleep in the loft over the byre.

He went into the byre, bringing his heavy coat with him; he took a horse cloth that was across the stall and turned to the steps up to the loft. He saw a shadow outside and it came into his mind that Brighid had slipped out of the house to say a word or make a sign to him. Quickly he went to the door. But the door of the house was closed, and there was no one outside.

Would she blame him, he wondered. She would lie awake through the night thinking on what had

happened and on all that had been said. She would not know how awful it was for her mother to have sided with the landowners. Brigid, like her mother, would think of de Courcey and his like as gentlemen, magnificent or exacting as the case might be. He would have to show her how they stood upon the neck of the people.

He would have to remember the words that were in the journals that Peter-Paul Hovey had given him.

He went up the ladder to the loft, bringing his coat with him. He sat down on a heap of hay. He put his coat about his knees. Now he was going to strive to recollect the words of Fintan Lalor.

"I hold and maintain that the entire soil of the country belongs of right to the entire people of that country." That was one of the sentences that came back to him. But that would be hard to explain. There were sentences that were stirring and that would not have to be explained, if he could think of them. He had written some sentences down in his note-book.

His hands went to the coat on his knees. Then he realized what he had in the inside pocket of that coat—he had the journals themselves with their talismanic phrases!

He stood up, holding the coat in his hands. There was a candle in the byre. Now—this very night—he would possess himself of all of the word.

He went down and lighted the candle that was on a ledge in the byre. He leaned against the wall, having taken the paper-covered journals out of the wide pocket of the coat he carried. (Oona had

taken them out of the pocket before and had put them back again.) The door of the house opened. That was Michael Paralon coming out. The young man moved about, whistled a few bars, took some turf out of the rick, and went back into the house. Now they were all going to bed within.

He opened the journals and turned the pages by the light of the guttering candle. On every page there were passages that had been marked—

“Food is our first want—to procure it our first work. The agricultural class, therefore, must precede and provide for every other.” This was the first sentence that he took note of.

And then he came on a sentence that was written in the time of the Famine and that brought back again the sense of wrong and outrage that had come to him when Honor Paralon spoke of what she had seen—

“A dissolution of the social system has taken place. . . . There was no outrise or revolt against it. It was borne for ages with beggarly patience, until it perished by the irritation of God in the order of Nature.” He read another sentence: “It is easier to convince a million men than a single man.” “God knows that is right,” said Francis Gillick to himself, excited by the paradox.

He went from journal to journal, and he came upon the sentence that he had heard Peter-Paul Hovey read—

“I hold and maintain that the entire soil of a country belongs of right to the entire people of that country, and is the rightful property, not of any

one class, but of the nation at large, in full effective possession, to let to whom they will."

And then he came on a paragraph which seemed a revelation. As he looked at the words by the light of the guttering candle they seemed to be delimited from the others and to stand out magnified on the page—

"The Land Question contains and the Legislative Question does not contain, the materials from which victory is manufactured: and that, therefore, if we be truly in earnest, and determined on success, it is on the former question and not on the latter, we must take our stand, fling out our banner and hurl to England our gauge of battle. Victory follows that banner alone—that and no other. . . . I proposed that they should merge the Repeal question into the mightier project—that of wresting the island from English rule altogether, in the only mode in which it could possibly be achieved, I endeavoured to show that they were only keeping up a feeble and ineffectual fire from a foolish distance upon the English government, which stands out of reach and beyond our power, and urged them to wheel their batteries round and bend them on the English garrison who stand there within our lands, scattered, isolated, girdled round by the might of a people." The landowners of Ireland were the English garrison.

Certain proposals followed. As Francis Gillick read the one marked "Three" he seemed to see the stepping-stones across a murky river—

"That they ought, on principle, to refuse all rent to the present usurping proprietors, until the people,

the true proprietors (or lords paramount in legal parlance) have, in national congress or convention, decided on what rents they are to pay, and to whom they are to pay them."

And then there was a paragraph that thrilled him as a prophecy would—

"It has been said to me that such a war on the principle I propose would be looked upon with detestation by Europe. Mark the words of this prophecy—the principle I propound goes to the foundation of Europe, and sooner or later it will cause Europe to outrise. Mankind will yet be masters of the Earth! The right of the people to make laws—this produced the first great modern earthquake whose latest shocks even now are heaving in the heart of the world. The right of the people to own the land—this will produce the next. Train your hands and your sons' hands, gentlemen, for you and they will yet have to use them. I want to put Ireland foremost, in the van of the world, at the head of the nations—to set her aloft in the blaze of the sun, and to make her for ages the lodestar of history."

The words thrilled in Francis Gillick's excited mind as the words of a poem newly forged thrill in its maker's mind. The guttering candle went out. He stood there in the dark of the byre, a man possessed of, and possessed by, prophetic words.

He must move. He went outside and walked swiftly away from the house. Not a man nor a woman, not a cow nor a horse—not a goat even—crossed his way as he walked on in the moonlight. Once a hare crossed the road casually—a big hare

that moved like a tired man who was enjoying his stroll home. He turned back by the road along which he had come on the day he met Brighid herding her mother's two cows. At the milestone near which she had sat he came upon two objects that had been left in the long grass. He took them up and brought them with him. They were iron pike-heads—the symbols of insurrectionary war. Someone had been hammering out a material mode of defence. He went on to Honor's. Going into the byre he climbed the ladder and lay down on the hay in the loft, his coat over him. He was soon awake, and with the first light of the dawn he began to read in the pages of his evangelist.

CHAPTER XV

AFTER CONVERSION

WHEN Francis Gillick entered there was no one astir in the house; the settle that he slept in had not been opened and the fire was unkindled on the hearth. Honor was the first in the house to be about; as she kindled the fire she told him that she would be away for the day. She spoke to him with her back turned, and it was evident that she was not prepared to have a full reconciliation.

Oona was up then, and Michael Paralon was whistling in the room above. Pot and kettle were hung above the fire, and Brighid, last of all, appeared. She held up a brown egg—that was for him; Francis Gillick smiled at the little comedy she made out of it and in sympathy with her for not being cast down by the strained relations of last night.

Porridge for everyone else, with eggs for the men; tea for Honor; then tea for the others because Michael Paralon had to be impressed ("You're used to a better bit at home," Honor said to him, but she wanted her remark to appear as the most formal courtesy); then with the tea pan-cakes that Brighid made. The brown egg came to Francis Gillick: he ate it without acknowledging by his look what it

implied—so much had an overwhelming idea entered into him.

The young men were to work that day in the bog near Monamore; the turf had to be set up while the weather was dry, and it was this consideration that gave color to Honor's bringing Michael Paralon to work for her. She herself was going to Eglish that day—again for a purpose undisclosed—and her best shawl and bonnet were taken out of the wardrobe. Francis Gillick and Michael Paralon would go in the ass-cart and they would bring back turf to replenish the rick outside.

Francis Gillick was thinking of how he could spread the idea that possessed him. He was sure he could make Brighid understand its full import. And what about Honor? She would be a perverse one. Indeed she might cast him out because of the idea that he was now the gossamer of. When he was outside he put the journals back into the inside pocket of his blue coat and he hung the coat up on the harness-rack in the house. He yoked the ass and cart while he listened to Honor's last injunctions: dinner would be brought to them in the bog by one of the girls.

He went on while young Michael Paralon came behind, exchanging hearty salutations with all he met, smoking his pipe, and shouting from time to time at Francis Gillick. It never occurred to young Michael to address Honor's working-guest in any ordinary way. And so they came to the bog.

They left the ass unyoked, and the little animal went picking amongst the heather. The young men took their shoes off and stood on the peaty ground

in their bare feet. Then Francis Gillick began the turf-cutting: he stood on the top of a bank that went down to a pool of black water; digging with the "slane" (a spade-like implement with a cross blade to it) he cut out the soft sod, casting it with another movement of the slane to Michael Paralon, who caught it, shaped it with a pat of his hands, and then put two sods, one propping the other, to dry in the sun. This was the first stage of turf-making—the beginning of the "rearing" of the turf.

They worked away, Francis Gillick planning in his mind and Michael Paralon singing and relating anecdotes. Almost everyone was a sort of character to this young man and he went on telling of traits and adventures, interested always and satirical most of the time. He talked of girls too: he was now after the girls who were older than himself—"wise ones"; he told how he had hugged Baun Driscoll. Nannie Gilroy was of no account. Then he came on to Brighid. She needed to be shown a few things. He talked about the favors he expected when he'd be round and her mother away.

Francis Gillick threw the slane down and went away from the turf-bank. The slane had nearly been flung in Michael Paralon's direction. But seeing him walk off in that way the other young man thought that he had given up work for a while, not being good at the job. He looked around him and hailed a group at another turf-bank.

As he walked away Francis Gillick became cooler. He looked back and he saw that Michael Paralon was going towards a group that had a party of girls.

He would stay there for a while and he could call him back to the work.

He was near Monamore now. Yesterday he had stood with Jonathan Woulfe beside the barrack over there. "Rich states are commonly proud and poor states are commonly hungry, and between Pride and Hunger there is perpetual Enmity." It was of this village the bailiff had spoken. Well, he would go into it now and find out what enmity was there.

The village of Monamore was made up of about twenty cabins. They were not arranged in rows; each was built as if for a whim, its gable-end right before the door of another cabin, and its back with only a passage between it and the front of a third. All the cabins were wretched-looking; the smallness of the terrain huddled one on the other. The fathers of the people who lived here had been turned out of lands that were now enclosed by de Courcey's demesne walls. They had made fields where there were only heaps and layers of stones and patches of bog. No holding was big enough to permit of a plough being used on it.

Here the women worked in the fields as constantly as the men, and on bright nights the men dug until midnight. Some years before their rents were raised, and now every family was in arrears—some for three years', some for four years' rent.

Francis Gillick crossed a stream by stepping-stones and went to the village. A man and woman were working on a small patch of ground, and when he spoke to them the man came over. Francis Gillick did not know him, but he knew Francis Gillick;

he had been one of the men who wore crape across their faces that night in Martin Jordan's cabin.

"Well, Francis Gillick," he said, "I saw you and Jonathan Woulfe having a talk up at the barrack yesterday. Believe me, you're the only one would bring yourself to face him. Will they be hard on us, up there, do you think?"

"I believe they will be."

"We mayn't be without help," said the woman.

The man—his name was James Dalton—then asked Francis Gillick to come into his house.

It was a cabin with two very small rooms. Three bare-legged children, very quiet, were seated on a bench near the fire, gathered together like birds on a branch. Their grandmother, a tall and vigorous woman, was knitting in a corner.

James Dalton told of Kiernan Mulcahy's visits to Monamore, and of secret meetings in a lime-kiln. There had been raids for arms. But there was no organization there—nothing to resist the bailiffs and the police.

At once Francis Gillick began to talk of an organization—he would call it The National Defence League. All the men of the countryside would come and help resist if one family was being evicted. At any rate, the first thing to do was to make a fight, here, around the hearth. Resist first, and advance to the attack on landlordism afterwards. He saw the grey-coats marching as he spoke. The man held back, but Francis Gillick felt he had the support of the silent women.

"What do I say?" said the elder woman when he

spoke to her. "I say that if we had a gun or a pike in the house we'd be better able to live."

"There used to be good men in Ireland," said the younger woman, James Dalton's wife.

"There used, in troth," said the old woman with spirit. "My father was out in Ninety Eight, and I heard him telling the people that if they had kept in the field for a month longer the English hadn't a regiment that they could make stand against them." Then they talked for a while about the prospects for the season: They could not judge how the potatoes would turn out, but the price they might expect to get for their sheep had fallen very low. The women said that butter was likely to go for very little this season.

"Very little indeed, ma'am; the dealers all tell me that," agreed one who appeared now, Paddy Sharkey, the fool. The cow's horn was in his hands, and he kept muttering how the people would have to be brought all to the one place, and how he could get pike-heads made, and how he was leaving them in places where people could find them. He was graver than any one present, this fool; his big tongue showed while he kept muttering to himself.

But other men came in and Francis Gillick talked to them, and made an appeal: "If a clearance is ordered, fight the people who come to put you out. We'll bring men from another part of the country to help you."

Out of the talk that followed a sort of plan emerged. They would drive their cattle and their sheep up into the hills and leave them in charge of the children. Then they would hold the village

against the police, making a fight in every house. The men's spirits rose. Pipes were half-filled and they began to smoke. The wise children whispered together and told of places in the hills where the cattle would be safe.

The children's grandmother had a story to tell of her encounter with an agent of the former de Courcey. He sent for her and told her he was going to fine her a shilling because her donkey had brayed outside his office. She enacted the scene. "The donkey knows you have just come back, sir. He was going to welcome you. The donkey knows, sir, how much we missed you." The children by the fire lived the scene that their grandmother acted with such ironic power.

And thereupon it came into Francis Gillick's mind that the children would remember and repeat the story after Castle Conquer and all it stood for had been destroyed. And then he knew that it was such scenes repeated and enacted beside the hearth that had formed the spirit of the nationalism he was heir to. For a woman like this told children such as these of Carew's massacres in Munster, and another told of Cromwell's burnings, and another of the deeds of the Rapparees who had held out against William's soldiers, and another of the peoples' rising in Ninety Eight.

* * * * *

As the propagandist was returning he was hillooed to by young Michael Paralon; that young man left the party he had been smoking pipes with and

came and joined Francis Gillick at the turf-bank. This time Michael cut the sods and Francis shaped them and left them to dry. They worked until the late afternoon when they saw three coming to them over the bog—Brighid and Oona, and with them Nannie Gilroy.

They brought potatoes that had been taken out of the pot before they were quite boiled and put into a basket with hay and covered with a flannel: they were now cooked in their own steam; they brought butter and a can of buttermilk. Nannie Gilroy had come to give young Michael Paralón a look over, and he and she soon started bantering each other. They all went where there was dry heather, and the young men, sitting down, ate and drank.

The bog, as they saw it from where they sat, was something of a wilderness, and something of a garden, and something of a work-field. Between the heather and the blue sky the larks sang. There were thick growths of heather, level spaces of black bog-soil, pits filled with black water, clumps of brown turf that had been cut out of the soil and of heavier black turf that had been taken out of the pits; there was the *ceanavaun*, or bog-cotton, weakly and tall, with heads that seemed white as snow-drops above the black soil or against the black-turf clumps; there was the bog-myrtle with the sunlight on its leaves; there were bunches of shivering grasses, and, here and there, odd and rare little flowers; trees had been dug out of the bog-soil: whitened now they looked like heaps of dried bones.

All around, and running into the bog that was cut and level, the heather made a wilderness.

Oona began prospecting through the heather in a certain direction; she was eager to see again and to show them a grouse's nest that had been shown to her. Gently, gently, she walked through the heather, following some path she knew. And then she made excited signs to them. She had indeed found the nest; they looked amongst the heather roots and saw the nest with the five grouse-chicks in it; the mother-bird had evidently just stolen away.

Oona stood in admiration above the nest with the unexpectedly lively chicks. She reproved Michael Paralon who said he would come back. Oona wanted him to go away. But it was Nannie Gilroy who got him off; she pushed and pushed him until he was away from the place. Afterwards they scattered, finding different paths across the bog to where they had been sitting. Nannie Gilroy was speaking about the Baccachs to Michael Paralon. "It's lucky for me," she was saying, "that I have the Baccachs so near me. All I'll have to do is to go to them some day and ask them to give me something for him to take, and then the boy I'm fond of will never forsake me." Oona went along with them towards the place where they had been sitting. Soon Michael was singing a ballad to two listeners.

"Why were you night-walking, Francis?" Brighid was saying to Francis Gillick. The others were gone, and he saw her now in the bog, where the heads of the ceanavaun grew out of the blackness. A little pool of black water around which rushes

grew was between them. "When I wakened up last night I heard you out in the yard," she said.

"There was something on my mind that I wanted to give thought to, Brighid, avourneen."

"Well, tell me it," she said.

She seemed withdrawn, she seemed as if she had some plea to make to him; she seemed as if she had some grievance to utter, and some reserve that would not have the utterance made.

"What did you think, Francis?"

"I thought this, and I made up my mind to this—that if they come to evict Martin Jordan I'll be there, and I'll get others to be there and help him."

"We're not like the bog-larks, Francis," she said, "we two. We can't settle down on the ground and have a place of our own."

"No, Bride, no."

"And that's the thought that I had in my mind since last night."

They were silent for a while. She looked across to where Michael Paralon stood singing, the two girls near him. Then she went on—

"There's no one to be any help to us—to get a place for us or to make it so that my mother will like you and take to you. And then you will bring trouble on yourself fighting for Martin Jordan."

"It's not Martin Jordan only—it's to fight them that have their feet on the neck of Ireland."

"I wakened up and I heard you night-walking, and I lay awake after that thinking—O that it would take a long time to bring us together unless you thought and thought about ourselves and the way it is with us. You are not thinking about that,

Francis; you're thinking of things that will make trouble between my mother and yourself."

"I can't do anything else, Brighid—I declare to you I can't—except help this man."

"Can you not, Francis?"

"No. Listen to me, Brighid. I was nearly sent away from you. Even that order I would have taken. And then I was let stay. And I found out that it was in terrible slavery that we were all living, and I thought to myself, and I swore to myself that a blow would have to be struck, and that I would be by when that blow was struck."

She looked around, giving herself time to think over what he had said. "But we're not like the bog-larks, are we, Francis?" she asked again.

"No, no, we're not."

"Think of us two, Francis."

He came over and stood beside her. He would think of the two of them. He would not go back from the fight that was before him, and he would win her too and make her mother accept him. Her discontent went but still she was serious. She was less withdrawn now.

"Where are the others?" he said.

"Look round and see." She put her arm under his.

"They're middling far away."

"I wish they were farther and farther."

They saw Oona tracing her way amongst the heather. She was looking for the grouse's nest that they had been at before.

"Oona, Francis—that's another thing. She has

a liking for you. It's like a child's liking for a child when they think it's killing to part from each other. Maybe she'll get to like Michael Paralon."

Oona came along; she was still looking for the nest. She looked towards them, went on, and then stopped dead. Brighid had taken her arm away from Francis's, but they were standing by each other. She remained looking at them, and then went down on her knees on the ground.

When she stood up again she made a gesture of grief. She stood as if she were crying there in the bog.

"Can't you find the grouse's nest again?" Michael Paralon called.

She had found it, she said. Her grief was because the chicks had gone out of the nest.

"Go after them, Oona. Follow them through the heather and you'll be sure to find them," Michael Paralon shouted to her. Oona did as he advised. They saw her run here and there in a crazy way through the heather.

Brighid now went to where Nannie stood. She took up the basket, and the two girls went towards the road. Michael Paralon and Francis Gillick went back to work at the pit; Francis looked across the heather and saw Oona still going through it. She would find her way out towards the fields, and then cut across to the bog-road.

They cut and shaped turf for a few hours longer; then they broke up some "bog-deal," the trunks of trees that were buried and that for a while had been drying on the surface of the bog. In the eve-

ning they filled the cart with dried turf and "bog-deal" and went back to Honor Paralon's.

* * * * *

Oona went through the heather. The grouse-chicks that were her very own were gone from her, gone here and there, and she would never look on them again. And there were Francis and Brighid standing together, the same as she had seen them when she looked from the top of the unlucky Giant's Stones. She had gone down on her knees when she had seen them; it was just at the moment when she was over the empty nest; now she went through the heather, calling to the wildest of wild little things to come back to her.

When she had gone far so that no one could notice what was in her face she looked back to where the company was. Brighid and Nannie were going back to the road; Francis and Michael Paralon were together. There was the bog in the sunlight, brown and black, and there were the figures that had nothing more to do with her. And suddenly Oona felt that she had been put down into one of the pits with its black, deep water. She stood still for a while. And then she went on through that wide, strange bog, crying to herself.

She was sitting on a white stone in the bog when she thought of going home. Brighid would be home by this, and her mother would be looking for her. And yet she did not want to be any place where Brighid or the others could come near her.

She went on. She crossed an earth-fence and

found herself in the laneway—but far up the laneway—that went from the bog-road. And there Oona sat down again. She thought of the Baccachs that had their squatting-place in the laneway; a dread of them, and at the same time, a desire to meet with them came over her. She could go down the laneway and meet them. Or she could cross the earth-fence before her and into the Gilroys' field, and from that home. But she was not able to move in one direction or the other; she sat against the earth-fence for a long time—she knew it was for a long time, for the ploughman in the field across from her went up and down many times.

A woman came up the laneway. She was about to pull a withered whin-bush out of the fence when she saw Oona. She eyed her suspiciously. It was one of the Baccachs. Oona's heart beat as she recognized the woman as Biddy's mother.

The woman looked at the young girl who made a movement towards her. "What do you want?" she said suspiciously, "we have nothing belonging to you." Then she remembered her. "You are the *gearceallach* that gave the milk to Biddy." She went towards her. "Tell me, do you want anything?" she said.

The woman's look became scrutinizing and professional; she noted the young girl's agitation; she was ready to give attentions. This readiness made her seem kindly to Oona. "There is a boy . . ." said Oona. "I'd like to ask you if there is a way to make him keep thinking of one."

The woman began at once; her tone took on the

rising stress of the wayside seeress. Her chant lulled Oona and bespelled her.

"Young girl," she said, "I have a word to tell you, and that word may be bitter to you or it may be sweet to you. All I'll ask you to tell me is the word that's in your heart, and it won't go hard with you, the thing I'll lay on you to do."

Some one else was coming; it was the woman's husband. Something passed between the two of them although no words were said. The woman went to the man and they spoke together. The man went away, leaving Oona with the sharp-eyed and attentive woman. "The oul' woman is sleeping now," she said, with the rising stress no longer in her voice. "The oul' woman is sleeping, and 'tis she that has charms and spells for all cases. Will you come again, young girl, and will you bring us something belonging to the boy you'd like to keep? It would be best if you brought something he wrote on—would you mind of that, young girl?" Oona now began to be afraid. She went over the earth-fence and into the Gilroys' field, but the voice of the woman followed her. "But do you come back to us, and we'll do everything for you; indeed we will, and 'tis we, the Baccachs, know how to fix it so that a boy's thoughts stays on a girl who has him in her mind."

Oona went out by the Gilroys' field and down the road past Nannie's, and so home. She lay down on the bed with a splitting headache, and when she appeared in the kitchen it was with her face tied up. She was able to keep to herself, for Nannie Gilroy came in that night, and her company had the effect

of making young Michael Paralon more voluble than ever. Brighid sat at the table after supper and read a book. Francis Gillick was restless; he kept going out of and coming back into the house. Honor went to bed early.

Brighid went out with Nannie when the visitor, rejecting Michael Paralon's company, started for home. Then Francis Gillick said good-night and went out to sleep in the barn, leaving Oona with Michael Paralon, who, having nothing to smoke, started to whistle. Then her mother called from the room to her and told her to make down the settle for Michael and then go to bed herself.

The bed was made when Brighid came in. Oona had heard her coming a way off, and she listened to hear if she would speak to Francis Gillick who was about the barn. But she came straight in. The bed was made for Michael Paralon, and there was nothing more to be done in the kitchen, for the young man had now put the ashes over the coals. The two girls went into the darkened room without speaking and got into their bed after saying very inaudible prayers.

CHAPTER XVI

AGRARIANISM

IN A while Francis Gillick would go forth and join Michael Paralon who was working in the field. But meanwhile he wrote in a book; it was not likely he would be disturbed in that unusual occupation, for Brighid and her mother were out of the house, and the only one who was about was Oona. She stood at the dresser cleaning dishes and watching him.

He wrote in a black-covered note-book that he carried around with him; he had already written in it extracts from Fintan Lalor's articles. Now he wrote down a plan for the formation of the National Defence League; he wrote down the names of those whom he thought he could get to join it—Kiernan Mulcahy and the men who frequented John Cummins' forge.

When he had ceased to write he looked at a journal that was on the table. Then he began to read the opening of a story to Oona—

"The light in the room was feeble, for all the lamps save one had been extinguished."

"Goodness," said Oona, "what sort of a room would that be, do you think, Francis, where there would be more than one lamp lighted? A room in a castle, I suppose. If we had two candles lighted

here my mother would say 'Do you think we're having illuminations to-night?' "

It was then that Martin Jordan, the man on whose behalf Francis Gillick had made his second journey to Castle Conquer, came in. Francis did not want to depress the old man by giving him twice over the mandate of Jonathan Woulfe. He put the book he had been writing in into the pocket of his blue coat, and he went out to join Michael Paralon in the field.

But Martin Jordan was not depressed this morning. Already he had procured some tobacco, and he was smoking his pipe with satisfaction. Yesterday he had been crying in his cabin because he was without a twist of tobacco or a grain of tea, and because he was about to be evicted from his house and holding. But this morning a passer-by told him that a letter was waiting for him in the post-office at Eglish; this letter, he considered, could only be from his son Peter who had gone to America, and Peter would have no business writing to him unless to send him a money-order. He dreamt of security and opulence. He would have money enough to buy off the process of ejectment and get comforts for himself. And so he lifted up his voice and thanked the saints and had pride in the fact that he was a man whom Providence regarded. He would tramp off to Eglish and bring his letter back in triumph. And he would first call into Honor Paralon's and have a cup of tea, not as a charity, but as a compliment due to one who had become superior to ill-fortune.

Oona, of course, rejoiced with him. She made

tea and gave it to him there. He would come back and have Brighid read Peter's letter to him—he wouldn't trust anyone else to read it. And Honor and Brighid were in English for letters, too. He would find them there and have the letter read to him before he took the road home.

So he sat at the hearth and smoked and spat, his eyes on a pleasant prospect. He was sure he had got rid of his bad luck by sending Jonathan Woulfe's hound back to Castle Conquer. Now he wouldn't be beholden to anybody. . . .

About the time that he had got to English in his tramp the forge in Cahirmoy had its full number of frequenters. Besides the smith, John Cummins, John Boyle, Daniel Maher and Kiernan Mulcahy were there. From the forge they could watch the whole of the main street: they were watching now two conspicuous figures—a stout priest with a riding-whip in his hand who was keeping beside a horse on which a lady rode. Hers was a deliberate face to which bright copper hair gave some distinction; she rode well, and she carried herself well, and she looked a capable woman of the petite noblesse.

"Now, that's a thing you'll have to stop," said Kiernan Mulcahy, talking from the privileged position of the returned emigrant. "I mean to say, you can't have your pastors colloquing with the tyrants of the country-side."

"Well, the tyrants of the country-side, as you call them, are good providers of a Sunday dinner," said John Boyle. He tried to give the emphasis of very quiet speech to everything he said. He did

carpentry, but he was typical of the shrewd small-farmer class from which he had come; his mind, however, was more open than the minds of the small farmers who have shrewdness as a dominating quality. He was over fifty, but he had a young family; now he was nursing on his knees the young child he had carried in with him.

Daniel Maher spat out. He believed in putting some salt into what he said—something vulgar—or was it sly?—in word or wink or gesture. He had a foxy beard, and blue eyes that could give shrewd glances—but they were eyes that only occasionally came to a straight gaze. Lately he had begun to carry himself in a jaunty way.

"I take it that the baronet's daughter was asking Father Halloran to dinner at Seagrave House," said Kiernan Mulcahy.

"Not ask - ing him," crooned John Boyle.

"Commanding him, then?"

"Now, young fellow, does your sister ask you or even command you to your spread on Sunday? Isn't it there for you?" said Daniel Maher.

"Is it that way in this parish?" asked Kiernan Mulcahy.

"By the mortail, it is so," said the smith, "and ever since I was the height of your knee that's the way it was. They all used to go for their dinners to Seagrave House—all except Father Murtagh—he never sat down to dinner there."

"Did he go to the hunt with them?" inquired Kiernan Mulcahy.

"Oh, aye, indeed he did. And if he did it wasn't

pure friendship brought him amongst them—he'd hunt with Martin Luther himself."

"All this arrangement will have to be ruled out some time," said Kiernan Mulcahy, "and why not begin now? Your pastors will have to come over to the side of the struggling peasantry."

Honoria Seagrave urged her horse forward. Father Halloran walked back along the street, acknowledging the salutations that were given him. Jonathan Woulfe appeared and went into Mark Bohoon's. And then came Hughie Magrane looking inquisitively to the right and the left, adding another item to the stock of information that he was bringing to David Moore—the information that Father Halloran had had another invitation to Seagrave House.

Then they saw Francis Gillick come along.

"That little fellow wouldn't flinch," said John Cummins.

Kiernan Mulcahy watched him appraisingly as he came along.

"He wouldn't flinch," said John Boyle, "but I can't see a crowd behind him."

"Well, as I've mentioned to you, I think Gillick has a head," said Kiernan Mulcahy, "and I want you to pay strict attention to what he says."

Francis Gillick came into the forge (Hughie Magrane had not gone so far away but he was able to observe his entrance). The four men shook hands with him. When they had all talked for a while he took out his book and read the extracts he had made from Fintan Lalor's writings.

Then he made a sort of speech in which he sug-

gested that the organizations that existed—Whiteboys, Right Boys and the others—should be formed into a coalition to break the landowner's power and make that much, at least, of a breach in the British domination.

"The notions aren't new," said John Boyle with the emphasis of his quiet voice. "I understand that you would make a centre here and try to direct the secret societies that were always against the landowners, and spread the organization through the whole country."

"Yes, if we could. And I'd advise them all not to pay rent this half year."

"You want to get us all transported," said Daniel Maher.

"Well, if you joined with the Clann in a rising, you'd expect to get gaoled or shot," said Francis Gillick.

"Our friend Daniel doesn't expect that it will come to that—eh, Daniel?" said Kiernan Mulcahy.

"I haven't the return half of a ticket to America any way," said Daniel Maher, with a wink.

John Cummins was against working with Whiteboys or with Ribbonmen. Indeed he was a member of a questionable association only because it was traditional that the forge should be a centre for conspiracy. Now he began to talk against the Whiteboys. "Never trust a Whiteboy, never trust a Whiteboy." He told how his father's house was broken into by Whiteboys when he was "a child on the floor." They searched the house for money, ripping up the feather beds and emptying the milk

out of the crocks. They went away at last without finding anything. Then his father asked where the money had been hidden. His mother pointed to her hair. That was where the Whiteboys got them! One of the gang had kept himself hidden, and he saw her make the sign. He brought the others back, and they took the purse out of his mother's hair. "You could never trust the Whiteboys—anybody but a Whiteboy."

The decisive voice of Kiernan Mulcahy cut across the smith's reminiscences. "I'm going to support Gillick's suggestion. If we could get all the anti-landlord societies together and give them the sort of directions that the Clann has we could do a power of damage, not only to landlordism, but to the British interest in the country. The people don't know yet what a republic means, but they know what it means to see a landlord take the last shilling from them, landlords judging them on the bench of magistrates, landlords ordering the affairs of the country, and a landlord's agent looking at their daughters' shoes to see if they couldn't screw the next quarter's rent up by the price of the buckles." He took a scrap of newspaper out of his pocket. "Here," he said, "is someone the name of Babbleton who has just said this—'the landowners of Ireland are the descendants of the settlers sent over to Ireland hundreds of years ago under a definite contract, and whose mission was to carry British ideals of liberty and justice.' "

"They brought British justice, you see," said Daniel Maher.

"By God, I'd like to fight them on that," said Kiernan Mulcahy.

"If every family refused to pay rent," said Francis Gillick eagerly, "the British Army could do nothing. It's the landlords would be evicted then."

Kiernan Mulcahy looked at him sharply. "I wonder do you realize, Gillick," he said, "all that's in your proposal? We'll have to work to get all the people in—the people who have their rent as well as the people who haven't it."

"Why should the people who have their rent put themselves against the law?" asked Daniel Maher.

"We should make it a principle," said Kiernan Mulcahy.

"A principle not to pay rents—musha, that would be a fine principle!"

"Not to pay rents until the present usurping proprietors are cleared out—aren't those the words of your exemplar, Gillick?"

"I have written them down here—yes."

"Well, I'm prepared to support you."

"Most of us have heard such notions and have thought them over a bit," said John Boyle. "I'll say this. If there's any failure of the crop this year we ought to tell the people to hold back their rents."

"What about the people that are going to be evicted?" asked Francis Gillick.

"Nothing can be done about them," said John Boyle. "We can prevent people taking the holdings that they are evicted from—leave such farms on the landlords' hands and use Whiteboy methods on the people that would take them."

"Will any of you defend the house of a man like

Martin Jordan? Will any of you come and help me to defend his house for him?"

"Are you going to do that?" said Kiernan Mulcahy.

"I am. It's wrong to let that man be put out and I won't let it be done. Will any of you be with me?"

"When will that eviction be?"

"To-morrow morning by the first light," said Daniel Maher. Such events were always known: someone in the barracks or the sub-sheriff's office was wont to drop a word.

"I'll bring some help," said Kiernan Mulcahy.

"Good man," said Francis Gillick.

He read the plan he had outlined from the big book that he carried. They listened to him and they discussed his plan. On the recommendation of Kiernan Mulcahy they formed themselves into "The National Defence League: Cahirmoy Centre."

Francis Gillick was delighted with his success. He shook hands with the four and went out of the forge.

"On thinking it over," said Daniel Maher, "I would advise that you have nothing to do with Martin Jordan. There will be a big force to put him out, and if we're to make a fight we'd better make it in the first instance for a man that's well liked—for a family would be better still. Martin Jordan's despised. There's nobody would cross the street for him."

"Well, what about leaving Gillick to fight the battle for him alone?"

"Let him if he wants to. Then we'll see what's in him."

"He went back on swearing us into the Clann. Maybe it would be better to see what's in him," said Kiernan Mulcahy.

However, they stood by the League they had formed. Kiernan Mulcahy whistled to himself as he began to make entries on the backs of papers that he carried. Now that there was something definite on he had become an influence; ascendancy came to him; he made significant plans. John Boyle's instincts were all on the side of Fintan Lalor's policy; he was prepared to make patient war on the feudalists. Daniel Maher was skeptical. John Cummins, the blacksmith, remained neutral.

And now they watched a brake that had come on the street. Three men were in it. They shouted out to the people as they drove past. They were the under-bailiffs from Castle Conquer—"The Knocker" and "Pucks," and a little rotund fellow who was the rent-warner for the estate. They pulled up at Bohoon's.

"Come out, Bohoon, you know you have to treat us," The Knocker roared.

The little rent-warner took to pleading with the others. "Conduct yourselves. Have conduct. The Magistrates are in town to-day." Bohoon came to the shop-door and remonstrated. "The Knocker," hauling the little rent-warner by the back of the neck, went past him and into the public-house.

The men in the forge stayed talking until the child on John Boyle's knees wakened up. She was a quiet child, and she just put her arms around her

father's neck. Then John Boyle went out; Daniel Maher and Kiernan Mulcahy went after him, taking different ways.

On his way back Francis came upon Oona. She was coming from Nannie Gilroy's, and looking back she saw him. She laid down her basket and waited.

"It took a spring out of my heart when I saw you," she said. "Am I all red in the face?"

They turned up the bohereen together. Her mother had come back, Oona told him, but not Brighid; Brighid had stayed in Father Bartley's, in Eglisish.

He would not see her then. He halted, considering this. He would not see her before he went to Martin Jordan's. There would be nobody for him to look to as he went out of the house.

Even that silhouette of her he would not see. It was in Owen's room, and he had no excuse to make to Honor for his going there.

It was singular of her not to have come back; unaccountable, unfeeling. But then she did not know on what errand he was going that night. Something should have led her to come back—surely something should have led her to come back!

Francis Gillick's pace slackened. He half-heard what Oona was telling him. There was news in an American letter that had come for her mother. And then he heard her say—

"Martin Jordan got Brighid to read his letter for him. There was no money in it. Isn't that terrible! He was crying going into his house, Nannie Gilroy says. If you only heard what was

in his letter! But sure it's his own fault that he reared his children so badly!"

"What was in the letter?"

"It was from the boy that went out last—Peter. He said 'Dear father, I can't keep my promise to send you the money for when I came over here I went to see my brother Dominick. He does be working near fires in an engine-room. The minute he saw me he put his shovel into a heap and threw a shovel-ful of grishogue over my feet and burnt them.' " (Grishogue is the hot cinders and ashes.) My mother told me what Brighid read and I remember every word of it. Isn't it an awful story? But these boys were a parable to the whole country, they were that unnatural."

"They are going to evict him now." Francis Gillick spoke vehemently for he himself had a feeling now of loss and loneliness.

"When, Francis?"

"By the first light of the morning."

"The poor man! May the saints help him!"

"There will be men there that won't let it be."

They were near the house now, within the beams of the candle that was in the window recess. Francis Gillick went no farther.

"Are you not coming in, Francis?"

"No, Winnie. I'm going to another place to-night."

She looked at him questioningly, regretfully. It was a pity he was going out to-night. There was only her mother in the house, and she would be resting. And she'd rather than all the dances she ever went to to sit near him in the quiet house.

"Michael Paralon went to the wake, too," she said.

He turned from her, but in a minute she had run after him. She would go some of the way with him, she said. But he told her that it would be better for her to go into the house now. He took her hard little hand in his and said good-night to her.

CHAPTER XVII

RESISTANCE

AS BEFORE the door of Martin Jordan's cabin was unlatched; as before the visitor went into an unlighted room; as before a weak voice spoke to him. He lit a candle he had brought, and he saw the man of the house lying as before upon his bed.

"What brings you here, Frahcis Gillick?" said Martin Jordan.

"The news that you were to be turned out of your cabin at the break of day."

Martin Jordan turned his face to the wall. "Tomorrow Judkin de Courcey will have me out on the roads—my God, my God! I'll have to put the bag on my back at the end of my days—my God, my God! I'll have to beg for a few potatoes, and be thankful to the people that will let me warm them in the ashes." He had been lying there listlessly through the night; now his certain destiny became poignant to him.

"I can't get used to the thought of it at all," he said.

"You're not going into beggary without striking a blow?" said Francis Gillick.

"What can I do—what can I do? An oul' man that hardly ate a bit all day!"

At that Francis Gillick laid down beside him the provision he had brought in—tea and sugar, a piece of bacon, square of oaten cake, a pipe, tobacco. “Musha, Francis, were you thinking of having a wake here?” said Martin Jordan, stirring himself pleasantly and then struggling out of bed.

“I’ll light a fire,” said Francis Gillick, when he saw Martin Jordan seated across the end of the bed, rubbing his leg.

“I’m ashamed to say it, Francis, but there isn’t a sod of turf next nor near me.”

“I’ll bring turf in.”

“There isn’t a sod outside.”

“I know where to go for it.”

“Sure you wouldn’t go to a neighbour’s rick? Sure you wouldn’t draw down on me the name of turf-stealing?” Of all petty offences in the Irish peasant community the stealing of turf is considered the most deplorable. He looked at Francis Gillick as if he thought the thing the young man was going to do would be the crowning humiliation of his life. Nevertheless, Francis Gillick took up the *cleevaun* or turf-basket and went outside.

But if he were going to rob it would be from a rick that he had some claim on. Twelve minutes’ walk brought him near Honor Paralon’s: he went through a gap and came alongside the byre. The turf-rick was beside it, at the gable-end of the house. All within the house were sleeping now; Francis Gillick saw neither door nor window.

He filled his basket and went away. As he came out at the opening of the bohreen that went to

Honor Paralon's he heard voices of people coming towards him. Who could the night-walkers be that were coming from that direction? He stood close to the elder-bushes to let them pass; he put the basket on his head to prevent his shadow being thrown.

One was Honor Paralon and the other was the hunchback, Jonathan Woulfe. They stood before the bohereen.

"A year's rent in advance is what Mr. de Courcey expects in respect to Martin Jordan's holding," said the bailiff.

"I could pay a year's rent in advance and more than a year's rent," said Honor Paralon, "but Mr. de Courcey is making little of good tenants like ourselves when he asks for it. None of my people ever belonged to the landlords' ill-wishers."

"Your father, I understand, voted against Mr. de Courcey's uncle when it would have served that gentleman's interests to get into Parliament."

"If he did, it was because all the people at the time were for O'Connell and emancipation."

"Well, you see that your family haven't as good a record as you'd like to make out."

"And what sort of a record has the man you spoke of—Mark Bohoon?"

"I have no reason to inquire into it. I wish you good night, Mrs. Moynagh. To oblige you I let you meet me here to talk this matter over. I am on my way to the town. And you must know that it is dangerous for me to be abroad at night."

Jonathan Woulfe then walked briskly on—he was taking the road to Cahirmoy. Honor Paralon stood

still for a few minutes. She did not go up the bohoreen. With a gesture of resolution she went to the road along which Francis Gillick had rode on the day when he had first come to the house. A path from that road went up to Martin Jordan's green field.

So this accounted for all Honor's mysterious movements since Owen went. And whatever sum he had left with her she was planning to use for the gaining of Martin Jordan's land. She was a land-grabber—Brigid's mother was a land-grabber!

And it bore upon the defence that he had projected for Martin Jordan's house. He had thought that some movements of decisive resistance might bring the evictors to terms. They might think that there would be little chance of getting another tenant into a place that had been so defended. But now there were two parties bidding for Martin Jordan's holding, and whatever resistance might be put up would surely be encountered.

They laid the fire and hung the kettle from the crook above it; the fire burned, the kettle sang, the bacon cooked above the coals. But still Martin Jordan held out against Francis Gillick's plan.

"A blow is neither here nor there, Francis Gillick. But there will be twenty bailiffs to turn me out, and there will be a sub-sheriff to take possession of my house, and there will be twenty constabularymen behind them to prevent me laying a finger on a single one of them."

"There won't be as many as twenty constabulary.

There won't be twenty bailiffs either. We'll be able to hold them off."

"And how could two of us be able to do that?"

"There will be more than the two of us. A few good men are going to pass the night here. We'll have something ready for the evictors in the morning."

"No, Francis, no. I wouldn't like that at all. Dear, dear, dear! Sure that's worse than anything. A big ruction round my little cabin! Men transported, maybe! There would be curses put upon my head and I going from house to house seeking for a bit of bread. Don't ask anyone to fight my battles, Francis."

"It's not your battle only, but the battle of the whole countryside."

"I don't like it at all, Francis Gillick. My house had never to do with night-walkers nor moon-lighters."

But now there was hot tea and broiled bacon and oaten bread. Martin Jordan ate and drank and began to show satisfaction. The candle was lighted, the turf-fire blazed on the hearth. He spread out his hands, let his shins get the heat, and he sat back in the corner.

There was a clock in Martin Jordan's. Francis Gillick had not noticed it before, but now he heard it as it ticked boisterously. It kept no time, however, for one of its hands was missing. He sat there listening to the clock and waiting for the men whom Kiernan Mulcahy was to bring.

Hours passed and he heard no sound of their coming. He went outside. Still no sound of men

on the road. As he stood in that starless place, in that silent space, he thought of a man on a drifting ship looking out to some known place on the shore. Still no one came. And now he knew that no one would come; for some reason Kiernan Mulcahy would bring no men to Martin Jordan's that night.

He turned back into the house. This time he brought with him the long-handled pike that he had left at the door when he had first come.

"No one is coming to our help," he said to Martin Jordan.

The old man was not overwhelmed by the tidings. "I suppose you'll go back yourself now," he said.

"No. I'll have to do all the resistance myself."

Martin Jordan sighed. "Well, you're a daring fellow—a daring young fellow," he said. Francis Gillick pushed a paper of tobacco to him. As he took the tobacco and lighted his pipe he said, "I'm glad to have your company this night, Francis." He went on, "I have a few handfulls of meal and I'll make a half a pot of stirabout. I've a sup of sour milk too and I'll ate something in the morning before anything happens."

"Have you a sack of chaff that a person could lie on?" Francis Gillick asked.

"There's a sack of heather-tops above on the loft. But you'll want to shake it out before the fire."

Francis Gillick tumbled the sack down from the loft; he opened it and gave the bedding an airing. Martin Jordan hung the pot over the fire. He sat opposite him, putting in handfulls of meal and talking. "God help me, God help me, where will I be sitting to-morrow night?" He talked about his sons

and daughters, saying that only one of them, Peter, would be sorry to hear of him walking the roads in hunger; the others wouldn't be a bit troubled.

But as the porridge began to bubble up he became less lugubrious. Like the ash falling off it, like the sod burning up again, so his old life showed itself. He told how he was harvesting in Kerry, and how a ship with a black crew came into the bay, and how he found the captain's yellow lady picking posies in the field, and how he had approached her and found her not unwilling.

"I'm tired," said Francis Gillick, "I'll lie down now."

"Then God give you good rest, honest man," said Martin Jordan. He put ashes over the coals and went back to bed, leaving the porridge warming. For a while he lay groaning and muttering prayers, occasionally giving cries of real unhappiness. Francis Gillick put turf around the fire, laid the sack on an even place on the floor, put his coat and waistcoat under his head for a pillow, and covered himself with an old horse-cloth he had found hanging behind the door. The crickets were chirruping around the hearth just as they did near where he slept in Honor Paralon's.

* * * * *

He dreamt that he was lying on a hard place and that his arms and legs were fastened. He was in gaol. Then the door of his cell opened and someone was let in. This person stood in a far corner

with face turned from him. But Francis Gillick turned; he saw that the man was Owen Paralon.

"It is not my fault that the meadows rotted, Owen," he said, "they put me in gaol." But Owen Paralon still looked at him as a judge would look.

"And Brighid, Owen," he cried, raising himself up. "Will she come to me?"

And still Owen looked at him like a judge.

He started up from his sleep. The narrow house in that first light was as strange to him as a prison cell. He went to the door and pulled it open. Brighid! She would sweep in, calling to him, putting her arms around his neck!

But no. There was only the empty bog under broken clouds; there was only the quiet light of the early morning; there was only a heron drifting away.

He heard Martin Jordan snore; he turned round and saw him lying on the bed, his mouth open. He and Martin Jordan were to resist the evictors that morning. Whiteboys, Moonlighters, would be their name. And Martin Jordan did not want to resist. If he went outside now and closed the door behind him he could be with the people coming home from the wake. Then he could lift the latch of Honor's door, and be there for Brighid to greet.

No. Where he was, there he stayed.

Martin Jordan wakened up. "I thought you were gone, Francis," he said. He looked him over. "You're the roy—all fellow, sure enough."

Francis Gillick now looked to the defences. Three steps, or rather three pieces of rugged and slippery rock went up to the door outside. Standing behind

the half door he could thrust with the long-handled pike at those who came up. Or, with the weapon in his hand he could make a sally; trusting to that weapon and to his own agility he could make a clear getaway if the struggle became impossible. He would wear a piece of crape across his face, and that might save him from being identified and taken up afterwards.

He took one window-frame out and closed up the other window. Through this he would have Martin Jordan fling scalding water on the attackers. He laid down on the floor vessels to hold the scalding water—a tin can, a tin basin, a broken ewer. There were other vessels that could be used as missiles. He put a great array of broken crockery on a table convenient to the door—jars, jugs, plates, dishes, a tea pot, bottles. Only a few sods of turf remained; he did not want to raid a rick for more. He took an old wooden chest and two old tubs for fuel to boil the water. He flung water on the steps.

And now he saw a man crossing the field—evidently someone coming from the wake. Francis Gillick called to him. The man stopped and then came towards the house—it was Paddy Sharkey. The fool was talking to himself as he came along—debating, as it were, with a person whom he had to inform. He had the cow's horn in one hand, and he carried three dead crows, their claws tied together, in the other hand. "You're out early, Francis Gillick," he said. "Do you know what I was just telling them? That no man's land ought to be treated like that. It's neither dacent nor honest."

"Whose land are you speaking of, Paddy?"

"Martin Jordan's land, of course—the good pasture field up on the hill."

"What are they doing on it?"

"Putting other people's cattle on it—that's what they're doing. I seen the cattle when I was coming down—three head there was. It's neither honest nor dacent."

"Whose cattle are they?"

"Mrs. Moynagh's—Honor Paralon's. It's her cattle that's there. Three head. I seen them. But I'll put them out of the man's field. I will, in troth. The blades of grass that grows in a man's field are for his own produce. I'll put them out, never fear."

"Take this can and bring back water, Paddy."

"I'll bring water back from the well that's at the end of the field. I know that well. I'll bring a bit of *slaun-luce* that grows there—a bit of *slaun-luce*. It's a good thing to eat in the morning." He left down the horn and the three crows that he carried and went through the field.

When Francis Gillick came into the house, Martin Jordan said to him—

"Maybe you'll be the means of keeping my little place for me, after all."

"I'll soon put you on your watch," said Francis Gillick.

"All right, boy; you're commander. Is there to be aiting first?"

"If there's anything left to eat."

"There's stirabout in the pot. I'll milk a goat and find an egg for you. This is the last day I'll live off my own estate."

He took up a blackened porringer and went out. His hens had gone wild and were laying away from the house. Martin knew their laying places and he was able to provide two eggs; he brought in milk from the goat too.

Paddy Sharkey came back with the water as Francis Gillick and Martin Jordan were eating. They offered him a share, but he would eat nothing except his *slaun-luce*. The fool and the man of the house were on distant terms; Paddy Sharkey, as a privileged and respectable person, thought little of the man who had lived so frivolously as to lose his land and the support of the children he had reared. Ignoring Martin Jordan he talked to Francis continuously about the cows in the pasture; about the herb *slaun-luce*; about the woman at whose wake he had been.

All went spiritedly enough until Martin Jordan beheld Francis Gillick breaking up the chest for fuel; then he wept silently. Paddy Sharkey was very active and Francis Gillick sent him to the well again and again; he gave him charge of the boiling of the water. Martin Jordan he posted on the road to watch for the coming of the sheriff, the bailiffs and the police.

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It had begun to rain now. In about an hour after he had been sent to his post Martin Jordan came stumbling back. "They're coming, they're coming," he cried, and then "Ochone, ochone! The little cabin I was reared in and that my children

were born in! Where will I turn for shelter in the night that's coming on?" "How many are there?" Francis asked him. "Two cars' full—aye, and more than two cars full; there are two cars full of peelers and the bailiffs are in a big brake." "Be ready then," said Francis Gillick. He had the frame taken out of the second window, missiles were to be flung through these openings. He put the crape across his face and he took the pike in his hand.

He saw the men in the brake—bailiffs and emergency-men—dismount. They began to tramp about to keep themselves in fettle, while the two old horses stood with their heads bent in the rain. He recognized "The Knocker" and "Pucks." Then the cars came up: in the first were constabulary-men—two, with the sub-sheriff and Jonathan Woulfe; in the second car there were four constabulary-men—the constabulary were all armed with rifles.

A short, rotund man, de Courcey's rent-warner, pointed out the house; Jonathan Woulfe and the sub-sheriff got off the car and came down the lane-way towards it. Paddy Sharkey started a hideous noise on the cow's horn; bailiffs and emergency-men drew together; the constabulary unslung their rifles; the sub-sheriff and Jonathan Woulfe stopped; then seeing no demonstration they came on to the house. The sub-sheriff put up his hand to pull thatch out of the roof as a token of taking possession of the house.

"Now," said Francis Gillick. Martin Jordan flung the scalding water, but with nervous hands. It passed over the sub-sheriff but splashed Jonathan

Woulfe on the back of the neck. The hunchback seemed maddened; he shook his stick and roared. Francis thrust the pike-handle against the breast of the sub-sheriff, and he fell off the steps. Then the two hurried back to the road.

The noise on the cow's horn began again, and now Paddy Sharkey's tongue went like the clappers people use to frighten birds from a crop. He shouted "Let Judkin de Courcey go back to his own cabin. Let him go back to where he was reared—in a cabin; we'll have nothing to do with him, for he's not the rale de Courcey at all." The bailiffs came on, gripping their truncheons, "The Knocker" coming first. The constabulary, holding their rifles, formed.

A shower of missiles came through the two windows of the house. The bailiffs and the emergency-men were dodging them when, with the pike in his hands, Francis Gillick dashed upon them. Striking at their legs he drove them down the lane-way. Paddy Sharkey shouted "You may go back, I tell you. He'll put the run on you. He has the pike, and that's what will put the like of you down." The constabulary moved to take up different positions around the house.

Francis Gillick drew back into the house. His notion was now to keep the resistance up until men began to come on the roads or into the fields. With a struggle going on before their eyes these men might make such a dangerous demonstration as might make the evicting party draw off. In the dash that brought him down the laneway he heard one of

the bailiffs say: "One stroke of the battering ram would bring down the side of the house."

And now there was a diversion. The little rent-warner who had lost his cap came cautiously back for it. Paddy Sharkey picked up his bundle of dead crows and ran at him. He struck the rent-warner across the face with the birds and pursued him to the road.

The sight of Francis Gillick at the doorway put "The Knocker" into a rage. He shook his truncheon at him. "You pup, you pup," he roared, "wait till I get my hand over you." Another attack was made. This time Francis Gillick's thrust would have some devilment behind them; he crouched at the doorway with the rebel's weapon in his hand, his muscles tightened to its grip. The evictors came on: jugs, jars, bits of broken plates fell amongst them. Francis Gillick came out upon the steps.

Suddenly he felt he had been struck. He had the sense of an enormous blow on his head. He rose up in defence with the pike held up. Paddy Sharkey cheered for him, and he smiled.

But the smile on Francis Gillick's face became a queer grin. He jumped off the steps to prevent his pitching off; he swayed and fell down. He had been struck on the forehead with a stone; it had been flung from a catapult by "The Knocker."

Paddy Sharkey picked up the pike and stood before the attackers; they drew back, and the fool stood waving his cap and cheering. The police, the sub-sheriff, Jonathan Woulfe and his assistants stood waiting for something to happen. Then Martin Jordan was seen limping down the steps of

his cabin. Tucked under his arm was a piece of turf and he carried a big key in his hand. He limped up to the sub-sheriff, and handed him, first the key, and then the piece of turf in token of surrender of house and land.

CHAPTER XVIII

BRIGHID'S RETURN

BRIGHID wakened that morning with her mind catching at an expected sound—"Heough, heough, heough." That would be the sow out of the pen; Francis would have let her out; it was now time for her to be up and in the kitchen where she would see him as he came back and in.

That was a cage-bird that was thrilling. Oona was not beside her. The texture of the sheets was different. Her eyes looked up at a ceiling and not at the covering that was over her bed. She would not see Francis Gillick that morning.

The priest's housekeeper spoke outside the door; she was in Father Bartley Moynagh's house.

"Miss Moynagh is not up yet."

The words came to her like the bright sunshine and the sense of comfort that all the things around were giving her; the words keyed her up; she felt like a child who has been given promotion or who overhears a compliment—"Miss Moynagh"—the name gave her an idealized identity: Here she was not merely Honor Paralon's daughter.

It was a canary-bird that was thrilling, not a linnet; a bird in a cage near. How nice the wallpaper was—splashes of rosebuds across the room and up to the ceiling. And she had the room to

herself with nobody to share it! The two figures on the mantelpiece, a boy and a girl, brown and smiling, were most romantic, and nearby the bird in the cage stirred and sang.

She should be up now. Anyway, she would not see Francis that morning if she were at home; he would be with Michael Paralon. No, she would not see him as she used to until Michael Paralon went away again. And now Oona was getting breakfast for them; he was looking around for her, and here she was, in this unfamiliar room, thinking of him.

There was a ewer and basin on the table for her, and there were towels with an embroidered "M" upon them. She would not splash the nice wallpaper; back of the table there was a splash-mat with a picture of a basket of fruit running through it. How complete everything was!

Her own seldom-spoken name was in her mind as she washed, and the name came to her again when she stood before the mirror that could tilt up and down, forward or backward. Brighid Moynagh! Like the refrain of a song her own name came to her. She held the tresses of her red hair in her hands—her hair that had so many kinds of brightness in it; she saw her bare arms, her throat, the curve of her bosom, and there came back to her from the mirror the potency and the pride of youth. She turned this way and that way before the mirror, thinking to herself that in a cramped house like her mother's one could never know what good looks, what appearance one had.

And standing before the mirror in that unfamiliar room her idyll came to her free from all entangle-

ments. Something had crossed them lately—Michael Paralon, Oona, her mother's hostility to him,—and she herself had been troubled and she had made him troubled. Martin Jordan! He was going to help the old man against the evictors. Why hadn't she put her hand into his and said, "Don't do it, Francis." Instead she had made herself strange and distant to him. Now she made the motion of putting her hand into his; she smiled as if he were there. And then she thought that Martin Jordan would not be evicted in any case.

She took off the *agnus-dei* that was at her neck and she held it in her hand. She felt the ring that was so well hidden. No one knew about herself and Francis, the sweetheart who had come to her out of such a far place. No one knew how they had bound themselves to each other. She sat down on the bed, pressing the *agnus-dei* to her face and thinking about him. And she felt they would be together where no one would be near them—on a high tower looking out to where rivers ran.

She would wear the ring on her finger that day; after she had left Father Moynagh and on her way back she would put on the ring; going back to where he would be she would have the ring on. It was in her mind that she would meet Francis at the place where they had met before—at the big stones that were called the Bed of Dermott and Grania.

She dressed. She had on a light blue dress that day; eagerly she pinned at her throat the first important ornament she had ever worn—a silver brooch that her grand-uncle had given her. Her face had a sort of gallantry. Her red hair she had

piled up until it was quite extravagantly high and encircling. "He told me to ask you to wait until he comes back from saying mass," Ellen, Father Bartley's housekeeper, said, "and if it's pleasing to you his reverence would like you to take breakfast with him in the summer house in the garden."

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He was lying in Brighid's and Oona's bed, and it was the broad light of the day. His head ached. He put his hand to his brow and he found a bandage across it. He must have been struck. With a baton? No, he did not remember that any person had got close to him. It was with a stone, he knew. Then he raised himself in the bed. He found that his coat and waistcoat were off and that he was lying there in his trousers and shirt.

There was somebody lying in the bed that was across from him: a patchwork quilt with red and black squares was on this bed and it was drawn over the person who was lying there. It was Honor Paralon, he knew. Her face was turned away from him, but she was not asleep; he saw her make deliberate movements with her hands: he saw her shoulders; she had on an old red jacket that she used to wear about the house—an old jacket that had patches of flannel on it.

She lay there with her face to the blankness of the wall as if she were thinking steadily about a matter that concerned herself alone. She sat up and remained looking before her. There was a spot of color on her yellow cheeks. Her mind was fixed

upon something. In her face there was obstinacy—the obstinacy of an imaginative person, an obstinacy that has passion behind it and that is like the rock mined and charged with explosive.

“Why wouldn’t I get the land?” she said, “the land that was promised to my father before he lost favor with the de Courceys?” Then she turned around to him, and she addressed him, speaking like one who makes a deliberate pronouncement—

“Francis Gillick, you have done me and mine a great disservice. You made it known to the world that I harboured a Whiteboy. I said neither yes nor no to them when they brought you senseless into my house. The thing that I wouldn’t have them do was put you to lie on Owen’s bed. Well, I’m done with you now, and you can go back to your own people.”

“Is it sending me away you are, Honor Paralon?”

“It is, in troth. I’m not going to have the name of harbouring Whiteboys.”

“And will Owen, do you think, be pleased with your doing this?”

“Owen left me full liberty to take Michael Paralon in your place any time I saw fit to do so.”

“But can you, Honor Paralon, say that I didn’t work well for the good of the place?”

“I don’t say that you didn’t strive well—I’ll give you your due in that—but everyone knew that you weren’t a lucky person to have about the house.”

“And is that all you have to say to me?”

“I say that I won’t have you at all after the way you went against Mr. de Courcey and Jonathan

Woulfe. None of the people of this house were ever of the breed of Whiteboys."

"If I had the name of being a Whiteboy," said Francis Gillick, "I would think it better than having the name of being a land-grabber."

"And so you throw words at me," said she coldly, "at me that took you into my house when even your own thought it a disgrace to have you near." She flung herself out of bed, and stood there in her red flannel petticoat and her old jacket. Then she went out of the room, and he heard her speaking to Oona outside the house.

He got out of bed and searched for the rest of his clothes. His coat and waistcoat he could not find, but he discovered his boots and he put them on. He went into the kitchen and he took down the blue overcoat that he had worn when he came first to Honor Paralon's. He put this on and he stood in the doorway.

There was the cherry tree in the garden before him; there was the weed-covered field where his horse was now grazing. There was the garden that he had dug and planted in. Wasn't Honor Paralon hard to send him away from it all? But she could not put him away from the neighbourhood: he would go to work with John Cummins, the blacksmith, and he would still be near Brigid. He remembered where she was then, and a plan for seeing her on her way back from Eglisch came to him.

He took the bandage off his head, and he touched the great mark that was on his forehead. He felt giddy for a minute; then he took his hat and went down the bohereen. His horse he would have some

one fetch for him; perhaps he could come back for it. He left that much behind him as he went off.

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They had made a ruin of the place: Francis Gillick saw that when he stood before Martin Jordan's once more. The roof had been burnt off and the walls were blackened. Rain had fallen on the walls. They had added a constraint to ruin by grimly fastening the door on the outside with a padlock. A few things belonging to the house had been flung out under a hedge. Francis saw the sack of heather-tops that he had slept on, and he saw beside it the coat and waistcoat that were his. He put his hands up to the bandage on his head: he could not remember when he had taken these garments off.

He heard voices, Oona's and Martin Jordan's. He stood against the door so as not to be discovered by Oona. "God Almighty help you, Martin Jordan," she was saying.

"Would you help me to gather—to gather the few hens I have? They've gone wild on me."

"In troth I will, Martin."

"The ducks have gone down the stream." This was said as if about a calamity that made all human effort frustrate. "The ducks have gone down the stream on me. The geese went off by themselves and I don't know that they'll come back at all."

"I'll search for them, Martin," said Oona. And then she said, "Oh, Martin, you don't know, but we're left desolate ourselves. My mother sent Francis Gillick away. I heard it all when I was up

in the house. From this day we're to have Michael Paralon with us. Think of that, Martin—Francis Gillick to be gone from the house!"

She gave a long sigh and went on—

"Brigid doesn't know yet that Francis is sent away. And there's Nannie Gilroy that said that Francis Gillick would never go from our house! See how all her prophecies went astray!"

Looking round he saw Martin Jordan. He was standing there shaking his head as if his tragedy was too grave to be spoken about. There was a dog's look of resignation in his eyes. "You understand," his look implied, "no one can comfort me." Oona spoke to him again. "Go up to the house, Martin," she said, "and my mother will give you a bit to eat and a bit to take away with you. And I know where to find a bag for you to put your bit in."

Francis Gillick put on his coat and waistcoat, and over it the blue coat that he had brought with him. He stepped out on the road, turning towards Cahirmoy and the blacksmith's place.

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For Oona things had been moving swiftly all that morning. First there was the sensation of Martin Jordan's actual eviction; then there was the spectacle of Francis being brought into the house senseless and laid upon their bed in the lower room, and afterwards there were the tasks of helping the evicted Martin—every event as it happened distracted her mind from the one that had gone before.

And then came the banishment of Francis Gillick

—the sending of him out of the house and away by her mother! Even this catastrophe was only one thing in a whirl of things, for still she was kept employed in offices for Martin Jordan.

She was going to follow the ducks that had gone down the stream. But suddenly the whole burthen of griefs and sensations became too much for her to bear. She stood between the stream and Martin Jordan's: looking back on the wrecked cabin and on the drooping figure that was now on the way up to her mother's to get something to go into a beggar's bag, a sense of enormous loss came over her. She stood lost and frightened; she was like a child who feels a dreadful thing near her in the dark.

Now she realized what effect her mother's words could have—Francis Gillick was driven away by them, never to come near the house again. What could she do now? Was there anyone who would bring her to where he was? She thought of Brighid. But how could it be Brighid who would bring her to him when it was through Brighid that misfortune had come upon him? She remembered her feeling when she saw them together at the big stones. The unfortunate things that had happened all came from that time: Oona did not know why this should be—they were together beside the big stones, Brighid and Francis, and maybe they had done an unlucky thing in keeping near the stones that had been left there by giants and witches. She thought of Nannie Gilroy. And then she thought of the woman whom she had spoken with,—the woman of the Baccachs, Biddy's mother. "Young girl, I have a word to say to you, and that word may be bitter or it may be

sweet." The words came to Oona again, lulling her and bespelling her.

There were Martin Jordan's hens. She hunted them around to the front of the house. And there was another hen there; she was picking at a sack that had heather-tops in it. And there, alongside the sack as if it had slipped over it, was Francis Gillick's black-covered note-book!

Oona took it up. And then she knew what she had in her hands. She had the writing of Francis Gillick's that the woman had told her to bring to them!

The world knew what the Baccachs could do for one—bring back a boy that had gone away. The Baccachs would tell her a charm to say, and then, one day, when she'd be walking along the road she'd look around, and there he would be, Francis Gillick, standing near her!

She went across the field and into the laneway where the Baccachs were, Francis Gillick's black-covered note-book in her hands.

* * * * *

Three men withdrawing themselves from the business of Cahirmoy fair gave themselves up to its festivity. The sympathetic bond was close, and now the common mind of the trio was disposed to regard itself as the arbiter of things musical. They had drawn a stranger-piper to their station before Bohoon's, and they were listening to his music with faces that might have damped a musician's enthusiasm. But this piper was blind.

He finished the piece and turned to his patrons with the ardour that was the very color of his life. "There's the tune for you now," he cried, "and I couldn't play it better if you were to pay me a hundred pounds." Thomas, the lame flute-player, removed a pipe from his own mouth and said deliberately, "We're not going to pay you a hundred pounds, and I can tell you we heard that tune better played." Kavanagh and young O'Hart concurred; they could say that they had heard the playing of them that were of the breed of pipers, the Griffins and the Joyces.

"I won't ask you for the hundred pounds this time," said the blind piper, "but give me the little provision for the road."

The flute-player had silver in his pocket since Sunday's dance, and he was content to patronize the stranger musician. "We're not done with you yet," said he. "We think that from the look of you, you could give us a good song."

The musician had another in his audience besides his three patrons. A slovenly-looking old man had been standing in the background; he shuffled up to the musician now, and stood beside him, panting like an old sheep. "Who's there?" cried the piper, turning his attentive face on that ignoble apparition. The pauper's bag hung across the old fellow's back, and a shrivelled, shaking hand was upon his staff.

"Who is he?" said the flute-player. "A man that was put out of his place lately, a poor man that has to get his living here and there. Lift up the song now, and let us hear the words of it straight and plain."

With a little preparation the musician began the lay. It was a dramatic recitation rather than a song. The piece was in Irish, a language spoken there only by old people and those who went upon the roads. It told of a man who meets a woman of The Other People, a fairy woman who proffers love to him. Told by the piper the narrative was convincing, for his ardour created the scene before you, and besides, he looked like one who might have met with such an adventure. He had the face of one who lived in the poet's intellectual world, and age and blindness had left him heroic, childlike and glad. He related how the man of adventure became in dread; how he dispraised himself by saying that he was peevish and ill-mannered,, and without the power of pleasing women. The musician went on, but it was apparent that he had wandered into another narrative. "Easy now," said Thomas Bacach, "tell us what the fairy woman did to the man."

"Begob, I'm past that," said the piper.

If you had been watching the man with the bag you would have said that a thaw had set in within his brain and that there was a mighty pressure there. Coming up to the piper he said: "She—she—she said 'it's a wonder you talk to me like that'—"

"That's it," cried the piper. "It's a wonder you talk to me like that, you knowing all the great kings I have destroyed." He went back to the mortal's excuses, and finished the poem with its fine imaginative climax. He tucked the pipes under his arm and stretched out his hat, gaining pence apiece from his patrons. He put his arm out for guidance and the man with the bag touched his hand. "Put me

on the high road, kind man," said the piper. "But sure I ought to know these roads well."

So together they mounted the road, two old men with staffs in their hands. Whiteness was on the hair and beard of both. The musician, for all his power and erectness, was not much younger than the man with the bag. The years had ennobled his face, giving it a more clear outline, a color nearer to marble. In his face there were ardours and intellect and the beauty of the creature who had never submitted to the yoke. His eye-balls, far-sunken in his head, were astonishingly contracted. Those blinded eyes, the lines of his features that suggested remote ways, gave the face a strangeness that had in it something repellent. The man beside him was of the average humanity, one without excess of will or excess of intellect, one prone to follies, prone to pieties. The pauper's bag hung across his back, and all the things that affront humanity had overtaken him—age, neglect and decay. His face was without determination of outline, his clothes were slovenly and dirty, and yet he now assumed a dignity that gave him a real pathos. As he went on with the other, tears streamed down his face.

"O Myles, *a-Gradh*," said he. "Are you blind altogether, Myles?"

"Who's that?" cried the blind man. "Is it Martin? Is it my brother Martin? Well, now, isn't this the queerest thing that ever happened?"

"Are you blind, Myles? Can you see at all?"

"I have a glim—just a glim of sight. And was it you, my brother, that they mentioned as the poor man?"

"I'll—I'll whisper it to you, Myles. I've—I've the bag on my back."

The pair had been standing on the road, but now the restless temper of the blind man urged him forward again. He put the stick before him, saying, "I've to be at the pattern at Moylena to-morrow. I'm staying to-night at Crossgar, at the house of the MacInerney's."

"Is it Brian MacInerney's?"

"Aye, Brian MacInerney's. It's a long time since you saw me, Martin. It's about a score of years, I think."

"A score of years? It's a score of years and more. Wasn't it when you were gathering up horses to take to France?"

"It was. I was gathing up horses for French George when I met you in the town below."

"Michael Joyce was in the town, and we went into his house and we had a drink together."

"Aye, in troth."

"I tell you it's more than a score of years. It's nearly two score years."

"No matter for that," said Myles. "I came back again from France, and I was concerned with horses again for a term of years. My eyesight failed me then, and I took to the road with the pipes."

"And had you any rearing, Myles?"

"A couple of sons, but they scattered east and west on me. One of them joined the English and got killed in their bloody wars."

"I had sons and they were no addition to me. One of them was all that I ever heard from. They

went to America. I was put out of the holding, Myles."

"Who put you out? Was it the landlord?"

"The landlord, Myles. It wasn't long ago, either."

"And how are you situated, Martin?"

"The neighbours built me a hut in an old quarry, putting one stone on top of another, do you see. Well, there's a spark of fire there, anyway."

"Maybe I'll go up with you, Martin."

"Do, *a-Gradh*. Here's the turn. Up this little road."

"Faith, I know this way well. Now, what am I thinking of? Honor Paralón used to live up there when she was a girl."

"Now, aren't you great to remember that? The Paralóns used to live up this way."

"Is it far up to the hut, Martin?"

"A couple of turns above the place where the Paralóns used to live."

"It's a long road and a stony road, Martin. No, Martin, I won't go up."

"I've a bit in the bag and I'll put a spark of fire under the pot. Come to my hut, *a-Gradh*."

"No, Martin. Step down a bit of the road with me. I'm feeling lonesome. They say, Martin, that after you go rambling one place is just the same to you as another."

"Maybe they're not right, Myles."

"They're not right, Martin. Look up at the sky, Martin, and tell me if it's going to rain?"

"It's not going to rain. Maybe you'd best be going now while you've the blessed light."

"I'm going now, Martin. The blessing of God with you."

"The dear blessing of God with you, brother."

Along the road between two bogs the blind man went, fine and erect in the evening light, and the man watching him stood as motionless as the old horse turned out into the field.

* * * * *

The summer-house in the garden had been built by Father Bartley himself—it was a round latticed house, freshly painted and ultra-green. The garden was a mere strip of sward with apple trees that now had green marbles on their branches. Brighid went into the summer-house and waited: the housekeeper came and laid the table, setting out large white cups and saucers and large white plates and bowls on a little cloth in the middle of a green table: soon after Father Bartley came to her.

He was a spare, upright, sandy man, with a thin nose and watery blue eyes; he was bluff in carriage and attitude, feminine, or rather child-like, in the way he took people, adapting his mind to personalities and points of view. He had a sailor's inability to connect himself with the world, curiously mingled with a priest's authoritativeness; bluff and insinuating, this simple, shrewd and kindly old man was a most appealing figure to people in the world outside. And to Brighid, of course, he was all that was experienced and cultivated—a priest, a scholar, and a gentleman.

They had breakfast together, and Father Bartley,

who was naturally entertaining, made a very pleasant hour for Brighid. He was pleased with her good looks and distinction, and the elementary examination which he had casually put her through satisfied him that his grand-niece was a well-educated young girl. She knew a little Latin even—well, well, he might have her reading Horace soon. He talked to her about her father: in spite of the fact that he had made such a disturbance about the man's marriage, Father Bartley knew little about the Moynagh who had been named for him.

When the newspaper was brought he read out some of the news and the editorials to her; he had only recently given up the Unionist journal, and he had not yet adapted himself to the policy of the Nationalist paper that he was now reading; the Lord Lieutenant of the county was his friend; indeed he had been on the viceregal yacht at the Kingstown regatta and had heard talk there that was most sympathetic to Ireland. And so he read with many head-shakings the alarming things that were spread out before him—Government's strong statement about resolute measures for the protection of property in Ireland; a leading article on jury-packing that would probably get the editor into gaol; a ferocious speech by a judge who had once been the people's advocate and who had been given silk on the renunciation of his early principles; reports of a new coercion act; anticipations of clearances and evictions. Father Bartley shook his head over everything he had to read out that day.

He asked Brighid if her mother had a good lease on her land; he brightened when he heard that things

were satisfactory in that quarter; not that it was real to him; the truth was that he could not make out why such a fuss should be made about land when there was the sea for men to take to.

Violence and outrage all over the country! He told Brighid that he was alarmed about the number of young men who were joined with secret political societies. The bishop had spoken of this at conference yesterday. Then the Irishman's sympathy with insurgency rose above the priest's distrust of secret combinations and the seaman's regard for English power: he talked with compassion of the sentences that awaited many of these young men; he had seen Irish political prisoners in gaols in England; one of them was handcuffed to a criminal who had a frightful disease—well, well, it was better not to talk of such a terrible business.

He went on talking about the world's affairs and his own interests. Brighid mentioned Francis Gillick in connection with the words of Latin that she knew. Father Bartley was greatly interested to hear that the young man at their house had been at Salamanca, and that he had taken some of the training of a cleric. That Francis Gillick had been at sea interested him too. But would he think of a "spoiled" priest as a husband for his grand-niece? Francis Gillick, Brighid remembered, did not think that any priest would approve of him. But if he and Father Bartley came together the elder would be sure to find something in the younger man that he would like. And if that happened that would break down a great deal of opposition to their mar-

riage. Now that Owen was gone, Brighid looked to Father Bartley as an ally.

They went into the street: first, they paid a visit to the church, and there Brighid knelt and said a prayer before the altar; the first time that one went into a new church if one said a prayer one's intention would be fulfilled. And Brighid prayed that Father Bartley might approve of Francis.

They went into a few shops and he bought her gloves and ribbons. It was fair day in English and Brighid saw many of her mother's neighbours in the street. As she went by with her grand-uncle they were noted, she knew; the reconciliation of Honor Paralon's family with Father Bartley Moynagh was an event of importance.

At noon he put Brighid upon the red mail car that ran to within a few miles of Honor's house. And he bade her good-bye in a way that showed her that she was likely to become a favourite of his.

The red mail car with the big-boned grey horse between the shafts went out of the town and dashed along the country road. Brighid took her ring out of its secret receptacle and put it upon her finger. When the car left her at the wayside post office that was on its circuit she would walk across the fields to the big stones where, as she had decided, she would meet Francis. Quickly they went on. She was the only passenger, and the boy driving said an occasional word to her. Once he slowed his horse to let her have a good look at an ash tree that grew beside the roadway: it was a curious tree, twisted apparently in every branch, and twig, and leaf. The boy told her that the devil had possessed a young

man in that part; that someone drove him out of the young man and that the devil had thereupon gone into the ash-tree. Which accounted for its writhen shape. In silence, then, the boy drove on. It was evident that he meditated every day upon that evidence of diabolical possession.

They saw each other at the same moment: she drew him within the enclosure of the stones; there each held the other close. With her lips to his face she said: "I knew that I'd see you here, Francis, but how did you get away?"

He told her all that had happened—how he had defended Martin Jordan's house; how he had been disabled (her hand went to his brow and remained touching the wound while he told about the struggle); how her mother had worked to grab Martin Jordan's field, and how she had put him away from the house.

What catastrophes since she had been away! And now he would no longer be in the house; they would not be together for a while in the mornings, and in the evenings he would not be there telling her about half-familiar words while her eyes rested on his face! And she was coming back to a house that was in stress and turmoil. If she had been told about all this yesterday or the day before she would have been in dismay, she thought, but now, with her hand upon Francis's brow, she felt all love and strength.

He told her how he had taken work in John Cummins' forge: He would not go from the place where she was. They stood with their heads touching

the upper stone, and talked in whispers about the changes that had come to them.

They came out from the enclosure made by the great stones and they went slowly towards Honor's. Francis told Brighid about the revelation that had come to him in the talismanic words that he had read, and about the organization that they were now making—The National Defence League. Brighid's hold on his arm tightened; she knew how dangerous all this might be.

But the thought of danger and banishment made her love go with him and hover over all his projects. They walked on in the twilight and each was surprised to think how little all this fierce distraction really was to them. Their love had become greater, they felt, and the world could do little against them.

They went on, planning, making decisions in whispers. At last they parted, Francis going back to the forge, and Brighid going on to her mother's. She met Nannie Gilroy at the turn of the road.

She let Nannie go with her and she let her tell her about all the happenings of the day. She insisted on Nannie coming into the house, for she wanted to use her as a shield against her mother's embittered recital of Francis Gillick's conduct.

But Honor was self-possessed and almost taciturn. She gave her returned daughter a brief account of all that had happened, and then she inquired about her entertainment at Eglish. Brighid spoke about the grandeurs of Father Bartley's establishment and about his evident friendliness for herself. She showed the silver brooch he had given her, and the ribbons. Suddenly she saw the ring on her finger;

she had not taken it off, but now she was able to slip it into her pocket under cover of a ribbon.

It was an empty house with Francis away. Michael Paralon was absent too; he was staying out at a wake. Oona remained very quiet. Certainly the place was silent and empty, but then Brighid did not mind this, for she had a whole drama in her mind. Later, when they were in bed, Oona whispered to her some details of Francis's going.

CHAPTER XIX

HONOR PARALON

TO MAKE much effort to achieve an end that has little relation to fundamental ends in one's life—that is a way to be whimsical. Honor Paralon was whimsical, but in her whims there was nothing of the gay casualness that should belong to such expressions. Her life as she lived it now was the result of whims that she had been resolute in carrying out. In her youth she had missed marriage for then it was her whim to regard herself as a person of high extraction. She had striking beauty, but she alienated all the young men who might have been good matches for her by treating them from a distance and with condescension. Then when she was past her youth she married a man who was past his prime—a stranger and one who had nothing to offer her. Afterwards she let every memory and every memento of her husband disappear.

Whim after whim possessed her while her daughters were growing up. But the good sense of her brother was a check on their being carried out. And now her brother was away from her, and she was secret, deliberate and persistent about a whim that had come to her.

It was not whimsical to covet land in the Ireland that Honor Paralon lived in: if anything was re-

lated to fundamental ends in the life of that community the possession of land was related to them. Men coveted land as they coveted a livelihood or an increase in livelihood: there were men who watched their lands as misers watched their secret treasures and whose idea of an agonizing dissolution was in the loss of their lands; there were men who spied and lied for land; men who forsook women who were young and kind and mated with women who were old and maimed and shrewish for the sake of land; men murdered for land and men went insane through the loss of it. It was not whimsical for the Gilroys or for Mark Bohoon to covet Martin Jordan's spread of green field, but it was whimsical for Honor Paralon to covet it—if the desire she felt could be called covetousness.

For in her aristocratic temperament there was not the feeling for land that put a glitter into the eyes of the peasantry; she knew nothing of this hungry intensity. She had only the vaguest notion of turning up money in Martin Jordan's field either by tilling it or by grazing it. She desired to look at it from her door and to reflect that from the bottom up to its green top that hill across from her house was hers; she desired to appear stately on the hill and to let people know that Honor Paralon walked her domain.

She had on the occasions of her mysterious sallies from the house interviewed Jonathan Woulfe who acted as Judkin de Courcey's agent as well as his steward, and who was sometimes to be found in a shabby room in the Sessions Inn. There was another bidding against her; Mark Bohoon who had

the shop in Cahirmoy that Jonathan Woulfe drank in. Honor Paralon really had no money to make a bidding: she told herself that she was expecting Owen to give her some. But she knew that this money should go for Brigid's dowry. Still she thought that there should be some way of applying it to the getting of Martin Jordan's land. She was to pay a yearly rent and a good deal of money down for the privilege of getting a lease.

A few days after Martin Jordan's eviction Honor Paralon set out for Cahirmoy. She passed Martin Jordan's roofless and blackened walls, but she saw only the green field beyond the house. No cart going to Cahirmoy gave her the offer of a lift—"Good evening to you, ma'am," was the greeting that was given to her—nothing more familiar than that.

Mark Bohoon was in his shirt sleeves when she went into the shop. Against the counter was crouched a whisky-soaked but lively little man who turned watery and inquisitive eyes upon her: he had the privilege of staying close to the counter and exploiting the lavishness or the good humour of those who came into Bohoon's drinking-place. "Mrs. Paralon, can I serve you in anything, ma'am?" said Mark Bohoon, looking at her mistrustfully.

She had come to see Bohoon face to face; she had a notion, not founded on anything real or clear, that she could get him to yield to her. She thought of herself in her bonnet and her carefully draped fawn shawl and she felt that she was an imposing figure. "I haven't seen Mrs. Paralon for many a long day looking so well as she's looking at this minute, and it's only the truth I state," said

Bohoon's client. He had withdrawn himself to the darkened side of the shop; he was reflective and approving as he nodded his head, still keeping his watery and inquisitive eyes upon Honor.

"I want to be private with Mr. Bohoon if he would give me the privilege," said Honor, ceremoniously.

"To be sure, to be sure," said the client, "never say it twice, ma'am. I'll take myself away for the present. Good evening, Mr. Bohoon, and good evening to you, Mrs. Paralon."

"It's time for that lad to clear out," said Bohoon, "he has put in the length of the day leaning against my counter. What can I do for you, Mrs. Paralon?"

"All I wanted with you, Mr. Bohoon, was to talk about the dealings that me and you are having with Jonathan Woulfe."

"You mean," said Mark Bohoon, "that your business is about Martin Jordan's field."

"I mean the field that neighbours my own land. I hear we're both in treaty for it, and maybe we have no cause to be bidding one against the other."

"Oh, come, come, Mrs. Paralon," said Mark Bohoon.

"Is it to me that you say 'Come, come'?" said Honor.

"Oh, pshaw, pshaw, ma'am."

"Why do you cast such words at me, may I ask, Mark Bohoon?"

"Because, ma'am," said Bohoon violently, "appearingly you want me or Jonathan Woulfe to believe that you can make a bidding against me. And you can't. That's all."

"I'd like to know why you, Mark Bohoon, think I can't."

"I'll let you know, then. You haven't the means to do it, ma'am. What have you at all, and what do you expect us to believe you have, and what is the meaning at all, in the name of God, of your trying to deceive the people? I want to know," said he, bringing his fist down on the counter, "why you are trying to make a fool of that manneen, Jonathan Woulfe."

"I have means, and means over and above what I need pay out to Jonathan Woulfe for the possession of Martin Jordan's field."

"Arrah, ma'am, where would you get it?" said Mark Bohoon with complete insolence.

"My brother Owen would have me buy the land, and he offers me all the means that I need for getting it against your bidding, Mark Bohoon."

There was a stay put on Bohoon's insolence. He looked Honor Paralon over once more. "Your brother," said he in another tone, "and what may your brother be doing now?"

"He has opened his shop, and he is in a good way of business. There's money from him to give a fortune to my daughter, and I can use it to pay for the lease of Martin Jordan's land, and pay rent on it, too, be the same what it may."

There was hearty reassurance in the way that Mark Bohoon leaned over the counter and spoke to her now. "I'm glad you told me about this, Mrs. Paralon," he said. "Arrah, ma'am, where's the use in us bidding against each other for the profit of that twister, Jonathan Woulfe? Tell me, now,

ma'am, what you were thinking of going to in the price for the bit of land?"

"It wouldn't be acting well to my brother to tell you that," said Honor. She was not being diplomatic; she had persuaded herself that she could get what money she wanted from Owen, and she thought that Owen as a business man would not want to have disclosed what he was prepared to give her.

Mark Bohoon was now all eagerness to have discussion with Honor Paralon. "We should talk it over, Mrs. Paralon, we should certainly talk it over. And there's another thing we could talk about, too, ma'am. I declare to goodness that something has come into my mind that's worth your while and my while to talk over. Where's Thady? Where's Thady, anyway? If I had that brother of mine to look after the shop I'd bring you upstairs to the parlour and talk all my mind out to you. I'll get Thady to come into the place and take myself off with you. Maybe it's the luckiest thing you ever did to step into my shop this evening." While he was talking and looking out through the window for Thady the whisky-soaked and lively little client came to the door.

"Get Thady for me. He's on the street somewhere. And get my son Dan for me. Tell Dan we'll be upstairs."

Readily the client went off, and in a while Thady, rheumatic and fumbling, came in from the back garden where he had been scaring birds. He was put in charge of the shop. Then Mark Bohoon led Honor through a gap in the counter, and upstairs, and into a room that was papered and carpeted.

This was the parlour of the Bohoon establishment.

Honor Paralon did not know what was in prospect; her stateliness, however, remained unabated, and she watched Bohoon do something that seemed habitual to him in that room—go to the window, and, holding the curtain in his hand, look out on the street. “Jonathan Woulfe,” he said, “that man would come back here if I burnt the nails off his toes. And he hasn’t the spending of a shilling, ma’am, not the spending of a shilling.” And then: “Mrs. Paralon, can I treat you to a glass of cordial?”

“You are exceedingly accommodating, Mr. Bohoon, and though it has come on you all of a sudden I’m not the less beholden to you. Did you say Mr. Jonathan Woulfe was coming here?”

“He’s coming into the shop, Mrs. Paralon, but he’ll stay below. I wouldn’t have him up here for all that he gives himself out to be a gentleman and a scholar. My brother Thady will attend him.”

“Do you want me to come in?” said a voice at the door.

“To be sure. Come in, Dan.” A young man came in. “Mrs. Paralon, this is my son Dan. Look him over, Mrs. Paralon, and see if he isn’t as clean and as straight a young fellow as you’d be likely to see.”

Honor looked the young man over. He was more prepossessing than one would expect the son of his father to be: he had cordial eyes, and he looked as if he had good spirits that were often subdued. He was weedy in his growth.

“We were talking about you, Dan, or we were

going to talk about you," said his father. "What were you doing?"

"Cutting feed for the beast."

"Well, you can go back to it, Dan; it was just that Mrs. Paralon wanted to see you."

The young man took his leave. "Which beast was it, Dan, you were cutting the feed for?"

"The short-horn beast."

He went out of the parlour. "'Tis not he will be getting the shop after me," remarked Mark Bohoon. "To tell you the truth, Mrs. Paralon, that's the young man I'm thinking of setting up on a bit of land outside the town. I needn't talk to you about how hard it is to provide for the youngsters, seeing that you are in a like case yourself. Ah, Mrs. Paralon, how fast they do grow up! Before we have a thing ready for them."

"I have two children," Honor said, "but I wasn't thinking of either of them."

She had not been thinking of them. But she could not fail to perceive that one of her children had come into the topic that was being discussed between herself and Mark Bohoon. The signs and tokens of matchmaking were being displayed. Honor became alert; she would not raise the glass to her lips until she could know whether his advances could be tolerated or would have to be repudiated. He had offered her the glass of cordial; it was now on the table before her.

"No harm if you haven't thought of them. But I thought you mentioned one of your daughters for having a fortune coming to her."

"Brigid has a fortune coming to her from her

uncle Owen. It's in payment for the use that he had of my house."

"It should be a good fortune, ma'am."

"No matter for that, Mr. Bohoon."

"One of them's an age by this. The red-headed girl—she's Brighid, isn't she? She's a credit to you, ma'am. Maybe you know what a father's thinking of?"

"Maybe I do, Mr. Bohoon."

"Well, you haven't put the glass to your lips yet. Drink it, Mrs. Paralon. Here's to you and to me and to them that comes after us." Honor Paralon had no reason yet for repulsing the first advance that had ever been made for a match with her eldest daughter. She took up the glass and drank the cordial while Bohoon tossed his off and then left the glass down.

"What would you think of this, Mrs. Paralon—you to buy Martin Jordan's land and leave it for your daughter Brighid for a fortune. I'd agree not to bid against you for it. And then my son Dan would put in for your red-headed girl. It would be a good match, Mrs. Paralon, for your girl."

"I'm not saying against it. But my daughter can have better than your son asking for her."

"Arrah, ma'am, who?"

"No matter for that. I wouldn't have her marry soon no matter what match was made for her."

"And I'm not one to cut the corn before it's grown. Get the land and let there be a paper between us saying that the land will go to Brighid and that Brighid will marry Dan, and then we'll make

a match of it. And that's all there need be about it for the present. Your health, ma'am."

Honor took the glass that Mark Bohoon handed her, but she said nothing for a while. The plan had much that recommended it. She could get the money from Owen for Brighid's dowry. The land would go to Brighid, but there need be no hurry about Brighid's marriage, and meanwhile she would be mistress of the green hillside. There was nothing against Mark Bohoon's son. Nothing more was said about the match. They both agreed to make no further offer to Jonathan Woulfe for a while.

He brought her down stairs and into the shop. The client was seated at the darkened end, and the look that he gave Honor as she passed had in it the knowledge of the whole of the transaction between her and Mark Bohoon. Jonathan Woulfe and Thady, Bohoon's rheumatic brother, were having words together—the voice of one was high-pitched and quavering; the voice of the other was resonant, bringing out words that only an educated man had the franchise of. Honor Paralon went out of Mark Bohoon's without de Courcey's steward turning his eyes on her. As she went out of the town she met the two constabulary going on their patrol. She saw that they gave her a scrutinizing glance. That challenge was because of Francis Gillick—they knew that that Whiteboy had been in her service. But they would soon see how little she had to do with Whiteboyism and insurrection; they would soon see her walking across the green hillside, the mistress of the domain.

CHAPTER XX

SAINT BRIGHID

BESIDE the fire they sat, and their voices, though low, had a vibrant quality, for they were speaking, not of every-day things, but of a drama that was well remembered. The voices came to Brighid through the window-opening: she was outside the house churning; splash, splash, the dash went in her hands.

And the voices that came to her were her mother's and Considine Gilroy's. Considine had come on a diplomatic errand as before. It was about Francis Gillick again. But all that was to be said between himself and Honor concerning his kinsman, her working-guest no longer, had been said, and they two were speaking now of a family tradition. Splash, splash went the milk in the churn; the voices came to her through the window-opening.

Sentences that were unusually framed came to her; both her mother and Considine Gilroy had a power over speech and the sense of a word in a story. What they told was far away at first, another time and another season of the year. . . .

Saint Brighid's Day! That was the first feast after Christmas. In February it was, and it marked the beginning of Spring. One would suddenly know

that the days had become a little longer. There would be some minutes more of light; the walls and the thatch of the houses would have a glow on them; there would be a radiance on the surface of the lake; the sun would be steeping itself in the depths of the bog!

There was, in the old days they were speaking of, a ceremony for this day. The people made Saint Brigid's crosses. They gathered rushes, the *luachair Brigid*, on the day when the power of the sun becomes noticeable, and they wove them into crosses with five points; they hung the crosses over the doors and the beds and from the rafters of the house, and in the byre, after a prayer had been said to thank Saint Brigid for her protection and care in the twelvemonth that was past and in which she was besought to protect and increase the life of the animals that were about the house. The voices came to her; they were speaking now of this house. . . .

They were speaking of Honor's house as it was two generations ago when another member of the family had owned it. That was Martin Gilroy. One Saint Brigid's Day. . . .

She heard her mother's voice speak of the daughter who had gone from Martin Gilroy. She was Brigid too—Brigid Gilroy. She was heavy and silent—a girl who had no quickness in her eyes. Women used to say that the child's slowness and silence came from the lonely days before her birth when her mother lived alone in the house and her father worked abroad, out of Ireland. When her

mother died all Martin Gilroy's thoughts were centred around his silent, slow-moving daughter. "Brighid," he used to say, "I will see that the man who looks for you will be the making of a good husband. Not the man who has the most land and the most cattle will be welcome to ask for you," he would say, "but the one who will be the most gentle and the most loving towards you."

The last man whom he would have speak to his daughter would be one from that foreign city where he had worked in his early manhood. He had seen sin and crime there—mainly amongst the people of his own stock who were there working like him. It happened that it was a man from that place who took up with Brighid Gilroy.

They spoke his name at the fire—John Bradley it was; he had friends in this part of the country. He used to come to the house; the way he spoke, reminding Martin as it did of the city where he had lived, made the man seem dangerous. One day Martin Gilroy was in the town. Passing a shop in a by-street he saw his daughter within. She was standing at the darkened end of the shop. John Bradley was at her side, talking to her with his eyes fixed upon her. When Brighid saw her father she snatched up her shawl and put it across her face. John Bradley spoke to him, but his readiness of speech made Martin Gilroy all the more unfriendly to him.

On the way home he spoke to her about meeting that man and talking to him in such a private place. "But," she said, "you wouldn't have me made foolish amongst the girls by refusing to talk to a man who

might be beside me." It was a strange speech to come from Brighid Gilroy. And from that evening she became stranger and stranger to her father. She was silent and slow-moving still, but they said that she had now a touch of speech, a touch of quickness. She would become restless at the fall of night, before the candle was lighted. Before this, once or twice in a week, she would go to where there was a dance. Twice her father forbade her to go out. When he did this she went into the room, closed the door, and remained there until her father was going to bed, when she went up and raked the fire, and then went back to the room. After this he let her go without saying a word to her.

They told how Martin Gilroy brought a web of cloth he had woven to a far town. He would not be back until the next day. He left the house empty behind him, for his daughter had gone to a neighbour's house. But as he came out on the road through a gap in a field he saw Brighid and John Bradley standing together. She saw her father, and drew away, and the man, seeing him, went away. "What had you standing here with the man I forbade you to talk to?" her father asked. "He was before me and I could not pass him," she answered. "And what was he wanting you to do?" "To go back a piece of the way with him."

"I'm vexed that this happened and I going on a journey," he said. "Go back to the house now. You must keep to yourself until I come back. You know what day to-morrow will be?"

"Saint Brighid's Day," she said.

"Well, then, I will cut the rushes when I come back to-morrow."

"I'll have the rest ready," she said.

"And when I come back that John Bradley will have to give an account of himself to me. Good-bye to you now." The cart that he was to go on came along, and Brighid's father got into it. Brighid went into the house that had been left empty. John Bradley would have had her go with him, not a piece of the way, but away with him altogether. And the struggle that she had had with him the minute before was not decided yet.

Considine, at the fire, was telling how Martin Gilroy walked into the house the next day. He did not see Brighid where he had expected to see her—somewhere near the door of the house. The fire was out; there was just a heap of ashes on the hearth. Where was she? He went to the room door and he saw her within, standing before the window. She had seen him come and she had made no movement towards him. "How is it that you let the fire go out?" he asked.

"I was going to make things ready," was all she said.

There was no welcome in her looks nor in her speech. She came into the kitchen and cleared the hearth and lighted the fire. But all the rest of the day she stayed in the corners and the shadows. Once he saw her trembling. Then he went out to cut the rushes, telling Brighid to prepare the feast that was always made ready upon Saint Brighid's Day. When he came back she had made all ready and she had

swept and garnished the house as for a visitor. The rushes he had cut were left in the byre outside.

* * * * *

These things were done in the generations before when the people had the Irish speech. The feast having been prepared and the candles lighted, and what was for the feast having been eaten, the long invocation to Saint Brighid was made. Then the table was cleared. If there were a girl in the house whose name was Brighid she went outside, and if there were no girl with that name the eldest daughter of the household went. A knock would come to the door. "Who is there?" the man of the house would ask. "Brighid," would be the answer that would come. "Welcome, Brighid." The voice would say "On your knees and with honour bid poor Brighid come within." And all the household would respond, "Enter and welcome; a thousand welcomes." Then at the door the girl of the house would be seen with the *luachair Brighid*, the cut rushes upon her shoulder. She would lay the rushes on the table, and the man of the house would make the first cross; then the others would join and would make the curious pointed crosses that would be hung from the rafter, and over the bed, and beside the stalls of the beasts outside.

In the story that was being told a knock came to the door. Then Martin Gilroy said, "Who is there," and "Welcome, Brighid," and again, "Enter and welcome; a thousand welcomes." There was

his daughter as the houseless saint. She left the rushes on the table, and her father made the first pointed cross. Brighid made another, and six or seven were made. They hung one from the rafter. Brighid put one above her father's bed. They went outside and hung a cross in the byre, for the beasts there were also to be put under the protection of Saint Brighid. Then her father put a cross above Brighid's bed. It was badly made, that cross, and it hung awry. He tried to make it hang as it should, but it would not stay right.

The invocation to Saint Brighid had not been said, for Brighid, as soon as the feast had been partaken of, had cleared the table and had gone outside. Now Martin Gilroy called upon his daughter to kneel down with him. The prayer was said: in it the saint was thanked for having protected the household in the twelvemonths past; she was implored to intercede for protection for every member of that household—protection from harm, disease and sin; she was besought to protect the beasts outside also. The prayer which should have come before the rushes were brought in and the crosses made seemed out of season now. When it was finished Brighid went into the room, leaving her father at the fireside.

He went to talk to her. When he opened the room-door he found her seated on her bed; the cross that had hung awry was in her hands.

"Brighid," he said, "you will tell me this night what is on your mind." She shrank away from him, her body shivering.

"That man," he said. "Did you see him again, Brighid?"

"Ah, my God," she said, "I knew you would ask me that."

"Did you see him again, I ask you?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"And where did you see him?"

"Here," she said.

"In this house, is it?"

"Yes, here."

"And how am I to know that he hasn't wronged you. . . . You don't answer me that! And how does it happen that my daughter would make herself as guilty as that?"

"He came to this house to talk to me again. And I kept him from going away."

"I'd rather that I'd never see you again," he said.

"I can go," said she, "I can go."

She stole to the door and she went outside that she might cry to herself. Then she heard him close the door and put the bar across it. She went to the door and put her mouth to it, and whispered through the crack. But when he opened the door she saw him standing there with a great anger on his face. "Never will I welcome you back across this threshold," he said. "Begone."

He closed the door again, and he did not open it until it was broad day. And when that man was seen amongst the people again he had around his eyes red marks that were as broad as the top of one's finger. He never spoke about Brighid, his daughter. She crossed to England. But the man

she went with did not marry her, for he had a wife living.

Saint Brighid's Day came again. Martin Gilroy opened the door of his house and went within. Now there was no woman there to do the things befitting the ceremony—to come to the door and be welcomed in the name of the wandering saint. There was no woman in his house to do this, but for all that the dumb beasts should not lack the cross of Saint Brighid to protect them. He would cut the rushes and weave a cross for the byre if not for the rafter of his house. He took down the reaping-hook and went out into the hollow field.

Brighid at the churn was wondering where Oona was now. She had seen her come up the bohereen. If she came in sight she would make her take a hand at the churning. But Oona was not to be seen now. She let the dash rest in the churn, and the words that told of a Saint Brighid's Day in the time remembered by the people at the fire came to her.

He left the cut rushes in the byre. He swept the hearth and tidied the house, for perhaps a neighbour-woman would come to take the place of Brighid for him. He took the bread that had been baking in the oven and laid it on the table. Beside it he put a bowl of milk. This would be the feast.

He knelt down. He could not give thanks for the protection that had been given his house in the year that was past, but he prayed for help that would lighten the load that he bore. He was still on his knees when the knock came to the door. "Who is

there?" he asked, and the answer came, "Brighid." "Welcome." "Bid poor Brighid come within." And he responded "Come within and welcome; a thousand welcomes."

The latch was raised and he saw a woman standing at the door, the bundle of rushes on her shoulder. She came within and he saw it was his daughter who was there. A change had come on her that had made her cheeks sunken and her eyes wide. Remembering the welcome he had given her, he said: "My welcome was for any comer this evening."

She brought the rushes to the table and she sat there. He took rushes and he made the first of the pointed crosses. She took the bread and milk that was there and she ate and drank; she ate and drank slowly as if prolonging a feast. He took the first cross and went outside to place it in the byre. She followed him.

Always, from the time she was a child, anything that happened in the byre was particularly vivid for that Brighid who was listening at the window. It came home to her what was in this part of the story, how the horse stamped and turned in its stall, and how the two cows breathed. She, too, was with those who went in; with them she felt the deep, hushed life of the beasts. Martin Gilroy went to the manger to hang the cross above it. He prayed that in the year to come that the lives there might be guarded. He hung the cross above the manger. Then, looking down, he saw in the hay a little child sleeping.

He looked long at the sleeping child. The little

face, they said, was sorrowful as with a long and a deep sorrow that came to it from beyond its own little life. He raised the child's hands and he put them to his lips.

"Welcome, Brighid, welcome," he said.

"Forgive me, you," she said. "Last year I prayed that you might forgive me; I prayed that prayer when I hung the cross above your bed and you did not hear what I prayed for."

"Take that other cross," was what her father said. "We will put it above where the child sleeps." The horse moved, the cattle breathed, the child awakened in its mother's arms. . . .

CHAPTER XXI

OONA

NOW her mind was fixed upon the byre. And then it seemed to Brighid that there was another happening there. The story she had been listening to had made it a place for a drama: now the shrieking of the swallows there, and the sight of their darting in and out through the doorway brought to her a strange apprehension.

Where was Oona? It came into Brighid's mind that she would find Oona in the byre with the swallows shrieking and darting around her. Most evil-omened were the shrieks and the sight of those strange birds—the malignant birds of country superstition. She left off churning and hurried to see what was happening in the place that their shrieking filled. As she came nearer she went more quickly. She looked in. Within the byre the swallows were swooping around like birds of prey, all the more terrifying for their smallness. On the floor, crouching, and moaning to herself, was Oona.

In her hand was the broken nest of a swallow. She started up when Brighid came in, and then two of the birds darted at her savagely: with a cry Oona fell down on the floor.

Her eyes closed and her hands became cold. What strange thing had been happening to Oona in

the byre that was spoken of in the story? And what had she to do with the swallows' nests that were so unlucky to meddle with? Brighid, in consternation, bent over her. What was she to do with Oona now? To bring her into the house in that state would be to make a fearful agitation. The swallows, darting around them both, strove savagely to drive them away. Then Brighid lifted Oona up, and half drew her, half carried her to the end of the house: there was a projecting piece of masonry there, and she left Oona on it, with her back to the ivy of the wall.

When she slipped into the house her mother and Considine were still talking of Brighid Gilroy and her child. She brought water outside without drawing the attention of either of them: with her moistened apron she wet Oona's face. The young girl opened her eyes; then the shrieking of the swallows came to her, and she put up her hands to guard her face from their fierce dartings. Then, seeing Brighid, she put down her head and began to cry.

"Am I safe, Brighid, am I safe from them?"

"You are, acushla. Tell me now what brought you near their unlucky nests?"

"Oh, Brighid, Brighid!"

"Tell me, acushla."

"God knows I ought to tell you, Brighid, for I'm afeard it was an unlucky thing that I did."

Brighid questioned her as to where she was coming from when she saw her on the bohereen. Then Oona made her confession. She had been with the Baccachs, and it was they who had told her to take down a swallow's nest.

She went on with a broken story. The child Biddy

had come to her when she was in the pasture field that morning. Her mother had something to give her, the child said, and she drew Oona over to their squatting place in the laneway.

Both the woman and the man were there waiting for her. And the woman told her that she could show her how to keep someone thinking of her.

Who was that someone? Brighid asked, and Oona, with her hands before her face, said that he was Francis Gillick.

"Oh, Oona, Oona!" Brighid cried, but Oona, sitting there in her misery, did not hear the cry that was in the words.

The man told her that she should bring to them something belonging to Francis,—something that he had written on. And she had hidden away a note-book that he had left behind, and she brought it to them. Brighid was frightened when she heard this. Where is the note-book now? she asked. Oona told her that the Baccachs had not given it back to her. They would go over, both of them, and get it back, Brighid decided.

What happened after that? They brought her to the old blind woman, Oona said, and the old woman told her that the way to keep a young man thinking about her always was to give him a taste of the broth made out of the swallows' nestlings. And they told her it would be well to make it ready that very day, as it was Friday, and they even knew that Francis would be coming round soon for his horse.

Brighid was aghast at what Oona told her. To make a broth out of the swallows' nestlings—what

a horrible idea that was! Even to go near the unlucky birds at all was fearful! Oona must be demented to be led by the Baccachs into doing such a thing! That she thought about Francis in that way—that was terrible, too. And then she had given to these untrusted people a book with his writing in it!

Oona looked at her, and she seemed to be, not demented, but just a pitiable child. Brighid spoke to her, comforting her. Then, while they sat there, a storm broke; thunder sounded near, and lightning made its scribble down the sky near to them. Oona became more frightened than before, and, as there was nothing else to do for her, Brighid drew her into the house.

She moaned as she was brought in; she moaned as she stood on the floor of the house. The two who were talking at the fire turned round and regarded them. Suddenly Oona slipped down, and lay in a faint upon the floor.

Considine Gilroy lifted her up while Honor questioned Brighid as to what had happened. Considine took control of the situation: he had Oona put to bed, first of all, and then he elicited from Brighid the happenings that had led to her sister's collapse.

Sagacious and kindly as ever he now assumed the part of councillor to the household. He had come there to inquire about Francis Gillick—his escapade, his dismissal from Honor's, and his present whereabouts—and he stayed to deal with Oona's case. She had brain-fever—that was made evident next day.

Honor was a quick despairer about her younger

daughter. She had made up her mind long before that Oona was wanting in her wits: she saw her becoming more and more alienated from what was normal and becoming. Her infatuation for Francis Gillick and her dealings with the Baccachs showed how unsettled her mind was. And she would show herself even more unsettled, Honor prophesied.

To this despair Considine Gilroy opposed his counsel and his authority. This was a turning in the child's life, he assured her mother, and if she were dealt with wisely at this time there would be no danger for her in the future. The thing to do with the child, as soon as she could sit up in the cart, was to take her to Saint Mogue's well. A draught of the water would take away any of the fever that stayed with her. Moreover, the pilgrimage there would remove the taint that was on her because of her traffic with the Baccachs. And lastly, the placing of her under the protection of the saint would mean the restoration and the salvation of her mind.

So Considine counselled and importuned, and at last he brought Honor to think about the notion of a pilgrimage to Saint Mogue's well. It was in the vicinity of Considine's house, and Oona and whoever went with her, could stay with him and his wife.

And now was the time for the pilgrimage. The weather was good for travelling, and in a while, when the harvest was in, there would be an embarrassing number of pilgrims going to Saint Mogue's well. It would be well to start in a day or two when Oona would be able to travel.

At last Considine's counsels were accepted in their entirety: Oona was to go to Saint Mogue's well, and

her mother was to go with her. Brighid was to be left in charge of the house. No one else would be there, as Michael Paralon, who was now in Francis Gillick's place, was not coming to eat or sleep there. When all this was settled Brighid took help from Considine in regard to Francis' note-book that was in the hands of the untrusted Baccachs. He and she went over to the small encampment in the laneway; they saw the man and the woman who was Biddy's mother, but they did not procure the return of the note-book. The woman had seen the children tearing pages out of it, they were informed, and after that the book was flung into the hedge. They went looking for it afterwards to get pages to make lighters for the old woman's pipe. But for all their search through the hedge they found no trace of the book that the *gear-cealleach* had given them.

CHAPTER XXII

IN THE STREET

BEASTS that were distrained for a tenant's non-payment of rent—a few head of cattle, a few sheep, a few goats—were driven from Sir John Seagrave's pound and put up for auction. Such auctions were taken as a matter of course, and other tenants of Sir John's attended this one; the men who were not in arrears and who could pull up some money out of their pockets had the chance of putting the forfeited stock on their own fields.

But at this one the bidding did not go smoothly. There were men there who contrived by look and gesture to make bidding seem dangerous. Three or four times a bidding was opened; then the man who had opened it faltered and then slipped away without completing a purchase. Hughie Magrane was there. A very vigorous he-goat that was penned by himself looked to the innkeeper like a profitable investment. He opened the bidding with a crown. But then an intimidating whisper that came from somewhere behind him caused him to refrain. Hughie Magrane made no purchase; he stayed to watch the unsold beasts being driven back to Sir John Seagrave's pound. The next day he went into David Moore's office. He told the solicitor what had happened at the auction and he had scraps of

information to give about those who had seemed to impose a veto on the sale.

The fact was that men from a newly formed league had made an appearance at that auction. The National Defence League had been formed. It was propagated by the frequenters of the forge. Luke Leonard, back in Cahirmoy, had examined and had accepted Francis Gillick's proposal, and then had laid out plans for the expansion of the organization that had been formed in the forge. He was an able and experienced organizer, and in a few days he was able to report the formation of branches at various strategic points. He and Francis Gillick were able to take men who had heretofore been only concerned with spasmodic reprisals and had been able to give them an inkling of the plan of campaign: the National Defence League, recruited from various secret agrarian societies, became a military body—Luke Leonard gave it the military organization, and Francis Gillick was able to give it a military spirit.

And now David Moore had consultations with the sergeant of the constabulary. The sergeant was able to show him that he had been noting the goings and comings of the men at the forge. Other investigations followed and reports were made to men high in authority.

One day, after a branch of the National Defence League had been formed there, a man who did not belong to the place came into Monamore. He told a man who belonged to the League that he had been asked by Hughie Magrane to become a driver for Sir John Seagrave's estate and be employed to drive

off the tenants' lands the cattle that might be distrained. He would not take the job; he did not own so much land as would sod a lark himself but he was on the side of the men who were fighting to hold their own land. The man was brought to a meeting that was being held in a lime-kiln and was made a member of the National Defence League. He was Hugh Jinks, the man who was head of the vagabond family in the laneway off the bog-road.

On the morrow that followed Oona's going Brig-hid went into Cahirmoy early. She went by the forge; looking into it she did not see Francis Gillick. She went on, and then, at the corner of the street, she saw him: he was in conversation with no less a personage than de Courcey's steward.

This strange encounter had come about in this way: Francis Gillick, going along the street, had come face to face with Jonathan Woulfe. The hunchback was surprisingly vigorous, surprisingly vehement: his drawn cheeks were flushed; there was something superb in the way he carried his head, something robust in the way he held his stick; even his shaggy brows seemed alive. It was likely that he had drink taken: still, he was very alert. He spoke and there was something resonant and powerful in his voice. He had grasped Francis Gillick's hand, and now he began to talk to him.

He had identified him as the young man who had been at the College in Salamanca—the one person in these latter days who could be responsive to something within him that caught at remembered bits of Virgil and Cicero, of Swift and Bolingbroke. He held Francis. The top-hat that he habitually

wore was tilted back on his head, and his eyes were glowing.

The top-hat was shabby, but the broadcloth was new. He stood there, gesticulating with a thick stick, energised and loquacious. Francis Gillick saw what was at the lapel of his coat—the yellow iris that thereabout was known as the Orange lily; noting it he remembered that this was the twelfth of July, and that the town that day was going to have an Orange celebration and parade.

He could hardly follow what Jonathan Woulfe said. He heard the Latin of Virgil and Cicero. Then the man made a quotation which Francis Gillick could not identify. "Seneca, Seneca," shouted Jonathan Woulfe. He quoted 'We love our childhood, then our boyhood, then our youth. Counting even yesterday, all past time is lost time; the very day that we are now spending is shared between ourselves and death.' "Would you believe it," he cried, "that I used to make my son write that out as a headline in his copy book—the very day that we are now spending is shared between ourselves and death.' "

But Francis Gillick had seen Brighid. Jonathan Woulfe had seen her at the same moment and had identified her as Honor Paralon's daughter. Saying that he had a message for the girl to take to her mother, he made a gesture summoning Brighid. She crossed the street, and stood near them.

The steward was authoritative in speaking to the tenant's daughter. The field that was formerly owned by Martin Jordan would be let to the applicant who would offer the highest rent and the high-

est sum down for the privilege of a lease. All this provided the applicant had a good record in the past. Meanwhile her mother should be let know that any cattle found trespassing in the vacant field would be taken to Mr. de Courcey's pound. After delivering himself of this, Jonathan Woulfe strode away, leaving Francis and Brighid together in the empty street. The steward's way was up the hill, and towards the Sessions Inn where those who were to join in the Orange celebration had already assembled.

They watched him go up the hill, his head flung back, the staff in his hand, and then he went out of their minds. They were together. They went slowly down the street and stopped before the stall of a woman who sold cakes and apples. There was real seclusion here. They were within the covering of a tent. The woman who sat beside her shelves was deaf, and so they were able to go on talking together.

Francis heard about Oona and her visit to the Baccachs; he heard about the spell that was intended to keep him thinking about the child; he heard how Oona had gone to Saint Mogue's well, and how her mother and Considine Gilroy had gone with her and how Brighid was wonderfully at large. He could see her now; he could see her at any time.

And Francis Gillick had something to tell her too. He had been John Cummins' assistant in the forge, but now, through the blacksmith, a piece of good fortune had come his way—nothing less than the use of a house and farm for an indeterminate time.

This is how it happened: the blacksmith had a brother, and this brother had a farm from a landlord who greatly favoured him. This man's wife died a year before and, having no children, he was left quite alone. He had kept his farm in good order, and even as late as springtime he had sowed and planted. Then he got restless and melancholy, and suddenly he started off for America, leaving house and stock and crop behind him. John Cummins took charge of his brother's farm, and now, having become very friendly with his assistant, he proposed that Francis Gillick should stay in the house and look after the land as a caretaker until such time as his brother returned or gave some directions as to the disposal of the place. And now he told Brigid about Bernard Cummins' farm and his own good fortune in being put into charge of it. It was a fine house—a house as good as Honor's. A house with land! He looked at her longingly. She said she would come and look at the house he was in. And then he told her that he would bring her something from that house; they were to see each other later on in Honor's.

And then there was an alien world sweeping in on them. First, a lady on horseback with a groom behind her came along. She had been facing towards the hill, but she checked her horse as a parade came heading down. She was Mrs. de Courcey. Unabashed and appraisingly she fixed her eyes upon Francis Gillick. Brigid noticed how young her face was under her broad hat, and how veiled, for all their bold looks, were her eyes. Then she pressed on, turning down the road that went out

of the town. The groom rode after her: he was hard-featured and he had the sullenness of a mastered man; he was Jonathan Woulfe's son. Suddenly shots were fired in salute and a drum sounded. Then there was a frenzied rattle—the Orange drums were on the hill. Orange flags were seen, and the parade to commemorate King William's crossing of the Boyne and the last conquest of the Irish started on its route.

Orgiastically the drums were beaten, ferociously the men around them cheered—"The crown of the causeway in roadway and street, and the Croppies under our feet!" That was the sentiment that was cheered for and celebrated in the frenzied drum-beats. In the street people came to their doors to look curiously on a procession that was to mark a triumph over them. Francis Gillick and Brighid had little thought for the procession, but they had some thought for the onlookers; they separated, turning to go in opposite directions as the parade with the drums came down the hill and people came to their doors.

CHAPTER XXIII

TWO IN THE HOUSE

THE woman who was gathering herbs told her she was lovely, and the words stayed with Brighid like the words of a song. She was standing in the doorway as the woman passed beyond the garden on her way up the hill. "It gives me new eyes to see you, acushla," the woman said. She came to her and offered her something from what she had gathered. What she gave her was the bark from some tree, a bark that girls washed their hair with—and all she would take from her was a cup of milk. Then she went on her way, and Brighid, as she stood for a while longer in the doorway, watched her going criss-cross up the hill.

She went milking early. She had not known before that the fields around her had such quiet nor that there were so many birds stirring in the trees and hedges. As she milked she sang "An Cailin deas cruidhte na m-bo"—it was the song that Francis liked to hear. She thought as she sang it that she was like the girl in the song. And she saw the place around her in the way that Francis spoke of it when he heard the song: the yellow-flowering weeds that grew high on the earth-fence—the bou-chalaun—were high and golden; the willows above them shone in the light, and there was a blackbird

singing in the bush—"farewell to the setting sun" as Francis said.

Brigid went into Owen's room as soon as she went back into the house. With the window open she could still hear the blackbird's singing. She made her hair loose, and its mass and its gleam surprised her. She looked into the mirror in Owen's room, and she saw herself red like the rose and red-golden like the saint who stood in one of the pictures in the chapel.

In the ward-robe of that room she had a dress; she put it on now, knotting up her hair as she stood before the glass. Then she put the cloth on the table there; she brought out the tea-pot that they always spoke of as being silver. It would stand in splendour on the table. She put her mother's greatly prized china on the table too, and she thought that she would magnificently light the room with two candles. And so she prepared for Francis Gillick's coming.

Twice she closed the house door to keep passers-by from entering. She opened it as soon as she closed it, for she wanted to watch for his coming. She hoped he would not come a way that would let him be seen by the people.

He came by the side of the house; she saw him coming, and then he was in the house with her. She closed the door; they kissed; they began to speak to each other. It would be her greatest loss if someone would come now! She would have to let him go out of the house. And besides the loss of him she would have to dread her mother's hearing about his being there. She thought of herself as

telling her mother and Father Bartley that she and Francis were married people—yes, more than pledged to each other! They would think she was wilder than Oona, and deceiving besides.

He had brought something from the other house—a geranium that was growing at the window there. She would plant it; it was something she could look at, and she would not have to explain how she had come by it. They sat with their hands in each other's hands, and she had him tell her all about the house he was in. If she ran away with him, she told him, she would go there with him.

When she went to fix the table in Owen's room she found herself becoming shy. She had not slept here and yet this was the place of her dreams. Wouldn't it be strange to be sitting here, talking to him? As if it were their own room—as if they were married people!

When she went back to the kitchen she lifted up the tea-pot from beside the fire, and she bade him come. They sat together in the room with the two candles lighted. They were laughing now.

Francis began to listen. He heard someone at the door of the house. Brighid heard a fumbling at the latch. She was filled with dismay. Closing the room door she went into the kitchen. There was no way of keeping outside anyone who happened to be there, for the door was not bolted. Then the latch was lifted, and Martin Jordan pitifully appeared.

"What can I give you?" Brighid asked.

"A little grain of salt. I got weak when I was coming along, and I want the taste of salt in my mouth."

He stood there in the light of the candle, the beggar's bag on his back. Brigid brought him to the fire, but he remained standing; the bag slipped from his back.

She was shaken by the sight of him standing there, a beggar on their floor. But a beggar who was a judge too. He stood dumbly for a while, but when she brought him the hot tea he began to speak.

And then it was not dismay nor pity but alarm that took possession of her. For he told of something that had happened that day, and it was frightening what he told so quaveringly.

For men had been arrested. At the forge they had been arrested. The blacksmith himself, John Cummins. And John Boyle, too. And the returned American, Kiernan Mulcahy, and another young man. Hughie Magrane had told him. He had been down, looking at the field that he, Martin Jordan, had been evicted from, and he had told him. Someone had gone to the police and had sworn an information against these men, Hughie Magrane said, and they were arrested by the constabulary. At the forge they were arrested.

Brigid, watching the half-open door, knew that Francis Gillick was listening to what Martin Jordan told. Wasn't it well that Francis had been away from the forge! They would have arrested him, too. And what alarm Martin Jordan had brought into the house!

She brought him tea and he drank it, still standing up. Again he asked for salt. She gave him salt out of the salt-box and he put it into his mouth;

then he sank down on the bench, letting the beggar's bag lie on the floor beside him.

And then she was in the room with Francis. He told her that the men arrested were his comrades in an enterprise. They had missed arresting him. Maybe they had gone to Bernard Cummins' for him. Now he would be on the run from them. He told her of the campaign they had been making, and then she knew that they would have taken him if it had not chanced he was away from the others: Francis who was in the room with her was an escaped man!

And there was the table with the candles on it lighted, and the tea-pot and the cups, and there were the chairs, the one he had sat on, and the one that she had placed near his. All was now upset and awry. She cried to think that she would have to leave the room she had made ready for him, but she put her hand on his arm and drew him out of it.

In the kitchen there was Martin Jordan. He lay upon the bench, and his eyes were closed; he might stay: it was they who were the shelterless ones.

But when she was outside with him her fear went away. He brought her up the hill, his arm around her. "Will they be able to take you, Francis?" He told her that he could keep free from the gaol now that he was warned; he knew how to keep the League active while he was on the run, and he would see her—at the Bed of Dermott and Grania he would see her and at other places.

Slowly they moved away from the house, stopping, joining in a kiss again. Up the hill they went,

along the sheep-track, stopping here and there, their lips on each other's lips. They went where there were brackens. They crouched together in the hollows. Once when he looked down on her face he saw tears filling her eyes. She was thinking of Oona, she told him.

They were back at the house again. There were no lights now. Was Martin Jordan within, or had he gone? Perhaps he had gone to sleep in the barn. Brighid went into the house, bidding Francis stay. Martin Jordan had gone; the house was empty. She called to Francis, telling him that he was not to go.

After all she would have him in the house; she would light candles and she would have him beside her here; it had all been unfinished here; he had not eaten in the room above, and she had not sat at the table there and watched him. She trembled to think that he would be here with her again.

He stood away from the house. She stood in the doorway making no sign. "Good night," he said, and stayed, for there was no answer from her. He could not make out her form in the doorway now. "Brighid," he called, but there was no word from where she had been. "Brighid," he called again. He went towards the dark doorway. Her hand was on his sleeve, and he heard her say in an even voice, "Come in."

And then her arms were about him; her hair touched his. Here he should stay, she said. In the barn—no; on the settle; she would make it ready for him. She would have to be near him wherever he would be that night.

But it was in Owen's room they stayed. In the middle of the night a blackbird cried out in the bushes near. It was wonderful and startling, as their being together there was wonderful and startling. They listened to hear if the cry would come again.

Suddenly there was a crash of sound; a gun had been fired.

"Oh, what is that?" Brighid cried.

"Nothing, Brighid. Some of the Orange marchers going home. Listen now and we'll hear a drum." They listened but no other sound came; the night was now quiet.

CHAPTER XXIV

A DEAD MAN

HE WAS up, and he had flung wide the door of the house to the first light. He would start off now; he would not have her go a part of the way with him. Brighid could not be held back from going.

If they were following him, he could baffle the constabulary, he told her. Maybe they were not following him; maybe the whole story that Martin Jordan had was unfounded. They talked like this as they went on. If that were so it would be for the best. He would be on Bernard Cummins' farm and she would marry him and go to live with him there. She said that, and then she thought of the reproaches she would have to face—her mother's and Father Bartley's. Well, she could face them, and then Francis and she would be together.

That evening they would meet at the Big Stones, he told her. How terribly empty the house would be until she would see him that evening. And then her mother would be back—her mother and Oona. She would be so different, she told herself. Would they know that she was different? All that she had been thinking yesterday was far away from her now. They were going up the hill; they would go along that way, and then down, and across a field and out

on the road. There they would part, Francis said.

Early morning crows had come down from the elm trees and were in the field. No matter how early you were up, the crows were up too. She wasn't thinking now, but she would be thinking queer, long thoughts about herself when the crows would be flying home in the evening.

She made the pace slow going down through the field to the road. His going would leave her by herself at that gate; he would think that she had turned back, but she knew that she would be there crying to herself when he had gone.

In the hollow of the field before the gate there was something black. It was lying stretched out. If it were a person, that person had not being moving, for the crows were flying and hopping near. Francis Gillick stopped. "There is somebody lying in the field," he said.

"Is it somebody, Francis? A drunken man, I suppose. Don't let us go past it. We'll go out by the gap this way."

They went along the hedge and came out on the empty road. They stood together, looking down towards the gate. "I wonder what it is that's in the field?" said Francis Gillick.

"It frightened me, Francis."

"Do you think that you'll go back that way?"

"No, I won't, Francis."

"I wonder what it is?"

"What did you think it was, Francis?"

"Well, I suppose it's a drunken man in the field."

"No, it isn't that, Francis. I was thinking . . .

the crows flying near it made me think of something."

"Well, I'll go and see what it is. It's near the gate."

"No, don't go."

"I can't leave you, Brighid, without seeing what's there. We were to part at this very place."

"I'll go with you if you're going to look at it. There won't be anything that's wrong there. I'll be saying, 'God bless you, Francis,' when we're there. Then I'll go."

They were at the gate. They could see plainly from the gate what was in the hollow of the field. A man was stretched out. That black thing beside him was not a crow, it was a silk hat. The great head and the hump made it absolutely certain who the man was—he was Jonathan Woulfe.

"Is he asleep, Francis? Is he lying there drunk?"

"No." His voice sounded as if he had left her and was speaking sternly at a distance away. "There is blood."

"Is he dead?"

She watched him open the gate and go over to the man. She saw him standing above the figure and looking down at it. "He is dead." Again the voice was far and stern. "Brighid, the shot we heard last night killed Jonathan Woulfe."

And then he came back to her. He had his hands on her shoulders and she saw his eyes looking strangely into her face. "Go back, Brighid," he said. "Go back now by the road and be in the house before anyone sees you about."

"And what will you do, Francis?"

"Maybe they'll think it was me killed this man. I'll keep away until something is found out about it. Jonathan Woulfe, God rest you!"

"Where will you go, Francis?"

"I'll go into hiding from this minute. Brighid, God give you courage! This will be trouble for you and for me."

"We won't think of that now, Francis; only tell me where you'll be."

"I'm going into O'Failey's Tower now. I've things there and I'll be able to change what I'm wearing and change myself so that they'll not know me. But you, Brighid, be at the Stones this evening after the angelus."

"Oh, Francis, Francis!"

"Keep up your courage. Go back now by the road." He put his arms around her and she clasped him tightly. "I can save you, Francis," she said, "if they take you. I'll tell them that you weren't near here."

"That won't be. They'll take somebody else, depend upon it. You're my dear love and my good girl. Can you go back now?"

"I can, Francis."

She turned around and went down the road. She looked back and she saw him watching her. He waved his hand to her. And then he darted across the road and over the wall that left him within the bound of Castle Conquer.

CHAPTER XXV

REWARD FOR CAPTURE

OONA, in bed the night she returned, said to Brighid: "If I could see Francis Gillick, I would tell him to go away from here. I was fearful that he would go away, but if I saw him now I would tell him to be sure to go." "Would you, sister?" Brighid said; she was startled into feeling that there was something visionary still about Oona who had been so recently at the holy well. "I would surely," Oona repeated. Yes, if she could see him she would bring Oona's counsel to him. She had seen him the day before at the Big Stones, but they could make no plan about seeing each other again. Oona sighed deeply and expressively as a child sighs; Brighid had to keep silent and take desperate counsel with herself.

Through the district there were visitings, searchings, questionings by the constabulary; the people were terrorized. Honor had the house door closed as if to shut out the whole turmoil and terror. She had Brighid venture out for water and turf; otherwise, for a day or two, she would have no sign of life made from her house. It seemed as if she thought that by withdrawal and the assumption of a great dignity a sort of charmed circle could be made around her household.

Then there was a thunderclap of news. It was brought by Michael Paralon (he still worked for them but he was fed and sheltered in another house). The men arrested—John Cummins, John Boyle, Kiernan Mulcahy, Daniel Maher and many another one, would be tried for conspiracy. They would all be transported. When he said this Michael Paralon had in his mind the legend of the convict ship of the generation before and the disappearance of men into that furthest of all countries—Van Dieman's Land. And outside the barrack there was a reward of one hundred pounds offered for information that would lead to the arrest of Francis Gillick. All morning Michael Paralon stood in the kitchen of Honor's house and reiterated his tidings.

Brighid saved herself from fainting. She sat mixing something in a basin while Michael Paralon told his story over and over again. She went out of the house and she stayed in the byre, her mind working and working on the fact that had been wedged into it—that they were going to try Francis Gillick—perhaps for the killing of Jonathan Woulfe. She prayed there that he might be able to keep clear of them.

That day the charmed circle which Honor sought to draw around her household was broken. There was a visit from the constabulary. They came looking for papers that Francis Gillick might have left there. They took away a copy-book on which he had a Latin exercise written; they took other papers, too—a letter from Owen, a country ballad that someone had written down for Brighid. They were terrible, for they seemed at once mad and purpose-

ful; they were not like human beings that one had ever seen or had ever talked to before. Their uniforms, their accoutrements, the whole sense of force that was embodied in them, their ruthless behaviour, paralyzed the household.

Again Brighid was driven to do something about the note-book of Francis's that Oona had brought to the Baccachs. She drew her sister to her, and they went off to the squatting-place in the laneway. There they came upon the woman who was Hugh Jinks's wife. "Is there anything that brings you here?" she said challengingly. "I want to ask about a book that this girl left with you," said Brighid hurriedly. "Let ye look for it," said the woman, and she went away from them. Brighid and Oona made a feeble and hopeless search in the hedge, where, according to what the woman had said before, the book had been cast. It was the same as before—they found no trace of a page of it. Next day Brighid heard from Nannie Gilroy that the Baccachs had departed.

At a meeting of the magistrates a speech was made by Sir John Seagrave congratulating the constabulary on their alertness in handling a dangerous conspiracy. The circumstances of the moment had made the murder of Jonathan Woulfe significant, for already there had been alarms about agrarian conspiracies and outbreaks, and the readers of the garrison press were given to understand that the murder of a landowner's steward marked the beginnings of Jacquerie warfare in the country: unless the government took relentless measures, it was declared in leading articles and reported speeches,

life nor property would not be safe. On the other side the forthcoming trial for conspiracy was being taken as one of the notable trials in Irish history: it was realized that it would be a duel between a repressive government and the forces against feudalism that were even then consolidating.

CHAPTER XXVI

AN ORDEAL

IF FRANCIS GILICK were arrested, and if he were to be put upon his trial for the murder of Jonathan Woulfe, what was she to do to get in her evidence for him? This was what Brighid Moynagh thought of continually—thought of until her days were just this one thought turned over again and again.

She knew nothing about the procedure of courts. There was no one to whom she could go for enlightenment. No one, except Father Bartley Moynagh. Yes, he. One night Brighid made up her mind that she would go to Father Bartley and ask him what she should do. It would be a great thing if she could tell him about herself and Francis Gillick.

Before she went to bed that night Brighid had laid down a plan for getting to Father Bartley. She told her mother that she had heard from someone that there was a letter from her in Eglisch; it would be from Owen. Her mother made no difficulty about her going, and she took it for granted that Brighid would see Father Bartley while she was in Eglisch, would stay over-night at his house and come back the next day.

She went into Eglisch: There, someone who knew

her told her that Francis Gillick had been taken; that he was now lodged with the others in the gaol in the town.

In that town all the streets led to the gaol: it was on a hill and it had a considerable area. In that town there were three public buildings—the court-house, the workhouse and the gaol, and the three had been built at a time when labour was cheap, and stone, apparently, plentiful; out of these three buildings the town, if it were shattered, might be built up again, as a town might be built out of a quarry that was a Roman ruin. These three buildings registered the will of a racial ascendancy—the will to dominate harshly.

Brigid Moynagh came before the gaol. It had a straggling outer wall; she thought she would walk around it, and that when she came to the entrance she would have thought of something to do. Around the outer wall she went, seeing the roofs of the prison-buildings within; she walked slowly around while a bell in a church tolled; she came before the entrance, a great, iron-studded door, with a smaller door with a wicket beside it.

Without thought, apparently, she had walked the whole way around the outer wall; now, when she came before the entrance she found that she had thought of nothing to do. A feeling came over her that all that she was going through had happened to someone, somewhere, before, and that there was something to be done that she should have been told of; it was terrible that she did not know it. She walked around again.

But, after all, she thought to herself, what she

had to do was very simple: they all would think that Francis Gillick had killed Jonathan Woulfe. But Francis had been with her when the shot was fired—they had heard it fired and had spoken about it. She had to tell that. Who would she tell it to? The man behind the wicket in the little door? No, not to him, but to the governor of the gaol; she would ask to be taken before the governor.

She came to the gateway again. This time she would go up to the little door and speak to the turnkey who opened the wicket; she would ask the turnkey to let her in; then she would go to the governor of the gaol. She pictured him as being a very thoughtful and slow-spoken man; he would be in a deep chair, and he would regard her gravely. She would tell him everything—everything! She would show him the ring on her finger.

She saw him again; this time he was not in a chair in a wide office where there was room for her and him to exchange confidences; she saw him looking at her out of an aperture, a wicket. She would have to explain to him first why she came—she would have to explain that to him before he took her into the office where there would be room to talk together, and where she could let him see how truthful she was!

But all that she thought of would be in vain—the governor of the gaol would not listen to anything she said; no one that was held there would be let walk out. There would be a trial; Francis Gillick, if he were there, would have to go before a judge—that was the way it would be.

A judge and a court, and within the big court-

house that was in this town. She would have to stand up before judge and people and tell out everything about him and her! And every word she said would be examined; she would have to say it over and over again! And there would be a pack of people in the court—the greatest pack that ever was in the mind of man, and they would all hear what she said, and it would be passed from lip to lip and from tongue to tongue! It would be written down. And people who thought she was just a young girl, innocent as she should be, would listen to what she said as at the Day of Judgment. And then, going home, they would talk about her; they would sit up all night and talk about her; what she said would never be forgotten to her, and when and wherever she appeared she would be a show afterwards—a show when she appeared in a house, a show on the road, a show in the market; she would never go to a market again, she resolved.

And not only would the people in the court hear what she said, and not only would others hear it from them, but it would be in the papers. All over Ireland the paper would be brought down to the fields, and the people working there would hear the news of the trial, and what she said of herself, and what the judge said of her. And the paper would be brought back again, and people would come into the house at night to hear about the trial and about her, and about what she said.

And before all that, her mother would have to be told!

But there was no use in her standing there and thinking of all this. She would go to see Father

Bartley; she would tell him all that was troubling her, and she would find out from him what she should do. And before seeing him she would go into the chapel and pray that he would be indulgent to her.

On her way she came to the post office. She went in and inquired if there was a letter for her or for her mother. Surprisingly enough there was a letter; it was from Owen. She took it and went outside.

Opposite the post office was the court-house. She saw its massive front, stone-built, and with three granite pillars bearing up a coping over which was the insignia of the Lion and the Unicorn. Before the court-house were two cannon. Could she ever go into that formidable place? She went on and turned into the street that brought her to the chapel.

Owen had written on the news of the arrest of the men in Cahirmoy, and of the murder of Jonathan Woulfe. He was desperately anxious to know how Honor's household had been affected by the catastrophe.

Brigid went into the chapel. In that hushed place she remained for a while, praying for Francis and his safety and praying that Father Bartley might be indulgent to her. At the altar rail, each kneeling one side of it, there was a priest and a young girl. Evidently the confessionals were filled, and he was hearing her confession in this semi-public way. Brigid watched the drama with the deepest interest: behind them was the altar, solemn and high; the priest had on the stole that consecrated him the privileged auditor; very meditative was the

priest, and the girl's quick, panting speaking seemed to strive to reach up to the immediacy that was in his face. She bowed her head; slowly his hand blessed her; his eyes closed as he murmured over her: silence; a bowed head; deeper meditateness and closed eyes. Something else said; the girl arose, genuflected towards the high altar, and walked down the aisle, freely, freely. Brighid drew a breath: if she had all that over. . . . Then she went to the priest's house. Ellen, the housekeeper, welcomed her, but she had to tell her that Father Bartley was not there; he had been brought out on a sick call to a village on the mountain, and he might not be back until late in the night. Wouldn't she stay? Father Bartley had said that a room was always to be kept ready for her.

Brighid, of course, stayed. She went to bed in the pleasant room she had been in before: the Brighid that had such delight in its pleasantness was far from her now; nevertheless, there was a great relief in her being there, where she could be by herself, away from her mother and Oona, and all the turmoil and terror that was close to her mother's house since that evening when Francis had come there to her.

She was awake when Father Bartley returned; she heard him put the horse into the stable and then come into the house; she heard Ellen call to him and tell him that Miss Moynagh was there. Miss Moynagh! Ah, if she could only be the Miss Moynagh she saw when she heard the name spoken first—the priest's niece, a girl with pride in herself, with no terror of a trial before her, and no dread of a bitter

separation! Ah, if she could only be the girl who was looking at herself in the glass the morning when she heard that name spoken in this house!

She told herself that she would not be fearful any more of coming face to face with Father Bartley, and telling him her story, and asking him what steps she was to take about the trial of Francis Gillick. Wouldn't the fact that he was just back from a sick call make him lenient with her and willing to give advice? Priests had to be very forbearing; everywhere they heard about sins and troubles; they were always prepared to hear about downfalls, and to give advice to troubled people. She would talk to her grand-uncle in the morning, and after that a great load would be off her mind.

She dressed as soon as she heard Ellen stirring. But, even so, Father Bartley left without her seeing him, for he had to go to say an early mass. Breakfast would be where they had it before—in the garden. Brigid had a long and anxious wait, sitting in the summer-house.

The priest came to her, looking shaken on account of his late travelling and his early rising; he pressed her hands, shaking his head for the catastrophe that they had to speak of. He was full of the Cahirmoy tragedy, as it was being called in the newspapers. A dreadful crime! It would check the ameliorative legislation that the Liberals in England undoubtedly had in view! The unfortunate country! Always, just as something was coming to it, some dreadful outrage like this happened, and English public opinion was aroused once more against Ireland! It was

terrible, terrible, he said, and he looked at Brighid with a wavering earnestness.

He knew how terrible it was for Brighid's mother, since this Francis Gillick was associated with her household. He talked distressfully before they began to eat. But then he got into better humour and became clear-sighted about the affair. Suddenly he startled Brighid by bringing the conversation to a point where she could enter with her plea. "I suppose, Brighid," he said, "you will be called upon to give evidence for or against this Francis Gillick."

"I think so," she said in a low voice.

"Or your mother will be called upon to give evidence. I think it is most likely that it will be your mother. Isn't she known as Honor Paralon everywhere? Still that won't keep the name out of the trial! Official, you see, and the names will have to be the official names—your mother's married name in this case."

Brighid said: "I want to know, uncle, how they bring you in to give evidence."

"They'll summon you," he said, "you or your mother."

"Will they? And how will they know what kind of evidence I have to give?"

"They'll know it, more or less. You'll be brought first to the counsel for the defence, I suppose."

"The counsel for the defence!" The name and title seemed most hopeful to her; she thought of Daniel O'Connell, "The Councillor," and of how his great speeches and his wisdom could get men set free. Maybe another Daniel O'Connell! She said:

"The counsel for the defence! Where is he, uncle?"

"I understand that there are people in Dublin who are making arrangements for a defence of the prisoners. It will be used against the Nationalists, you see, this murder. They'll get a good lawyer. But the sort of jury that the government will pack will be out to convict. I'm told they'll have that Castle bloodhound, Karsen."

"What will happen to the prisoners, uncle?"

"If they can fix the killing of Jonathan Woulfe on any one of them that one will hang. As far as I can see they won't be able to do that."

"Then what will they do with them, uncle?"

"They'll use the murder to drive home the other charge—conspiracy. That will be the way—they'll make a grand trial for conspiracy. Aye, and they have a sure case, from what I hear."

"And what will be done to the prisoners?"

"Twenty years—that's my belief. They'll get a verdict on conspiracy, and send them away for not a year less than twenty. That's what they'll do, believe me, Brigid."

"Oh, I can't believe it, uncle."

"There, there! But I declare you look as if you were fainting away."

He came to her and looked at her with wavering earnestness. Then Brigid said: "Uncle, I came to tell you something. Think bad of me, if you like, but help me and advise me. Uncle, I'm Francis Gillick's wife."

"Oh, Brigid, Brigid," she heard him say.

"It's a confession I want to make to you," she said. "Will you hear me?"

"I'll hear you, but not in confession. I'll hear you here, Brighid."

Then she told him of her clandestine marriage with Francis Gillick. She told of her receiving him as her husband on the night that Jonathan Woulfe was shot to death. He sat for a while as the priest sits in the confessional; his face was set, his hand was before his face, and he was all austere and detached. And then he stood above her with shaking hands raised, a guardian aroused. When she had finished speaking, he looked at her fixedly and said:

"Brighid, could you tell me all this in confession, before Almighty God?"

Then she knew that he had become hopeful that what she said was all a romantic story, all designed by a young girl for the purpose of saving a man whom she thought of as having done a dangerous and heroic deed.

"I could," she said. "It is all true."

"Who knows about it? Does your mother know?"

"No," she said. "I brought myself to tell you. I couldn't bring myself to tell anyone else."

"Of course there was no marriage," he said, "you were deceived and seduced by this young man. And you, Brighid! Just the same as any wild girl in a bad town."

"What will I do about the trial, uncle?"

"He could call on you to give evidence—that is if your story is true."

"It's true, and I think he wouldn't call on me."

But I'll give evidence. My evidence could clear him, couldn't it?"

"Clear him! It will clear him, yes, but it will stain you—you and your name, Brighid."

"Am I to be afeard for that, uncle?"

"No. You can't let him be condemned. But I believe, though, it's condemned he should be."

"Oh, uncle, if you knew him you wouldn't say that."

"Ah, Brighid, I heard many's the young girl say the like of that! Little did I know that it would ever come home to me through the like of you."

"Will you tell me what I am to do?"

"Oh, Brighid, Brighid, I was proud of you, and now you've my heart broken. You will have that name of ours made a show of through the length and breadth of Ireland."

"Better to do that," said Brighid, "than have an innocent man sentenced for his life."

"I don't know what to do for you, you wild, bad girl."

He turned his back on her with these words, and as he did she left him and ran into the house. Her shawl and something else that she had been carrying was in the room; she took them and ran down the stairs and out of the house. She went quickly by the chapel and came out on the road that went to her mother's. It was a long road. But now she felt so outcast that that long road was native to her! She would go to her home, but she would stay in it only long enough to tell her story, and then she would go straying along the roads like the tinkers and shuilers!

As she went on it became settled in her mind that she would go to see this counsel for the defence in Dublin. But who would show her how to come to him? She thought of Owen. Then she took his letter out of her dress, and, sitting down on a stone by the roadway, began to read it again.

He spoke kindly of the men arrested. He showed alarm for the safety of Francis Gillick. Yes, Owen had feeling for Francis and the others! She would go to him and tell him all, and she would get him to take her to the counsel for the defence. That was what she would do, and Owen's place was at the end of the road that her feet were now on. She would implore him to let her stay with him until the trial was ended. Having resolved upon this, she went more assuredly on.

The ring of hooves behind her made her turn around. There was Father Bartley riding after her. She waited. He came up, halted his horse, and got stiffly off.

As he came to her now she thought how unschooled Father Bartley looked, with his unsure gaze and the tear running down by his long, sharp nose. "Brighid," he said, "God help you; you have great trouble before you! Pray that God and his Mother be your assistance! I can do little for you, although, God knows, I should put my shoulder to the wheel for the sake of you and the Irishmen that they're trying to get the noose around. Go to the Councilor in Dublin, and may God enable you to get them and yourself out of the hobble you're in."

In her heart she thanked him for coming to her

like this. She said: "I'll go, uncle, and I can't thank you enough for being as kind to me as this."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Brighid," he said, and now he was indulgent to the girl, for he was one of those men who have difficulty in maintaining their severities for long. "I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll give you my old purse and whatever's in it, and maybe it will be the means of getting a greater help to you, with the help of God."

It was a God-send to her, indeed; not the money only, but the open hand that was shown her, for this was the first assistance that had come to her in the days of her trial. She thanked him with all her heart, and then he turned away from her without taking her hand, and he got stiffly up on his horse and rode back. He was a man perplexed, but he was a helper.

He left a heartened Brighid on the road. There was as much as ten pounds in the old purse he had given her, and that sum gave her an independence. Now she had the means of going to Owen. She walked on with assurance and resolution: that night she would tell her mother all that had happened, and all that she was prepared to do.

As she came near home she met people who came to her curiously and spoke to her. Already she was implicated. Was it true that Francis Gillick had been taken? And Francis Gillick, the man for whom there was a hundred pounds reward for arresting, had been in her mother's house, hadn't he? They made inquiries that were vulgarly curious, or else they warned her against schemes that the law might

lay against herself and her family. She noted that no one was certain that Francis had been arrested.

As she went on it began to rain; she put her shawl over her head, but still she was known, and still she was stopped and spoken to.

And so she came back to the house, to the house that was direful to her. Here was her judge, here was her trial. The door was closed. Rain was falling on the thatch, and rain was dripping down on the porch. She lifted the latch and went within.

Her mother was reading. The journal that came to the house on Thursdays was already there; Brighid realized that it had an account of the arrest of the men of Cahirmoy and the shooting of Jonathan Woulfe. Her mother stopped reading this portentous history as she came in, and Brighid showed her the letter from Owen; they talked to each other casually about what was in it. Her mother went on reading again; Brighid listened and heard her own heart beating.

Oona was white and drooping; she was beginning to sink into a great fear—the fear that her dealings with the Baccachs had brought ill-luck upon Francis. Brighid tried to console her. And when Oona asked her to read a story to her she took a book down, and, in a low voice, began to read to her.

She had an impression of dullness, of unintelligibility, but she read on and on until Oona, with a sigh, said that she would go to bed.

It was still early in the night, and Brighid and her mother were alone in the living-room. Honor sat with a handkerchief around her head, making

marks in the ashes with a stick as she always did when a fit of brooding was upon her. Brighid sat near; she had a piece of crochet-work in her lap.

"Mother," Brighid announced, "I am going to my uncle Owen's."

"I knew that something had come over you," her mother said. "Now it is in your talk."

"Something has come over me," said Brighid, a little startled to know that her mother was noticing her. "Something has come over me, and you'll have to hear about it, mother."

"Isn't it enough," said Honor, "that the child Oona would be almost gone from us without your going off on a flight?"

"I will have to go, mother."

"Owen didn't write to you to come to him; if he did it's not in the letter that you showed me."

"He doesn't know I'm coming to him. Mother, what would I do if I hadn't Owen to go to?"

Honor lifted her head and looked at the daughter whose appeal was away from her. She looked at her and she hardened herself. Her daughter had no right to assume so much of womanhood: what was she, after all? A *girsha* that didn't even know that her growth was not finished! She turned away with scorn, and looked down again in the ashes.

"What do you want Owen to do for you?" she asked. "Is it something to do with that spoiled priest, Francis Gillick?"

"Mother, it is. Won't you let me tell you? Him and me were married."

"Married! You're dreaming, child. What priest would marry you?"

"No one did. But we were married. It was the same to us as if we were married before everyone. And Francis was with me here the night Jonathan Woulfe was shot dead outside."

Then Honor looked at Brighid, her mouth falling open. "So that's the story you would tell me?" she said.

"It's a true story, mother."

"And so you've gone away from me like that, and from any good man that might come seeking you? How could I think it of you, Brighid, daughter? It was because I had such high regard for you that I couldn't think it of you. But why should I lay my tongue on you now when you have your own troubles?"

"I am going to Owen," Brighid said, "for Owen is the only one that will help me to clear Francis."

"You'd be better helped, Brighid," her mother said, "if you told no one what you have told me this night."

"No, mother; you don't mean that. But whether you mean it or not, I'm going to say everything that will get Francis Gillick freed."

"I'm thankful," Honor said then, "that neither Teig nor Farral is here to know the disgrace that's coming on this house."

She turned away, and sat looking into the fire. Brighid sat there, waiting for another word. But no word came from the older woman. Honor would sit there for long, brooding and aloof. Oona stirred in the room below. Then, "Go to your bed," Honor said to Brighid.

Brighid went, but not into the room where she

used to lie with Oona. She went into Owen's room. It was the first time she had gone into it since she had been there with Francis Gillick after the shot was fired. Seeing her go into that room her mother was aware of the separation that was between them. But still she did not stir, still she did not speak. As for Brighid, she said a prayer and lay down on the bed in the darkness. Long after she had lain down she heard her mother rise out of her solitary meditation; she heard her rake the fire, covering it over with the ashes.

CHAPTER XXVII

BEFORE THE TRIAL

IT IS the same within as without: the Lion and Unicorn, the Royal Arms, is within too. Facing the people is the judge's seat, and at the back of it is the Royal Arms—'Honi soit qui mal y pense'! How significant is that Norman tag! Such tags have come down through the centuries, surviving the changes and vicissitudes of a thousand years."

The young man who was speaking was called a junior counsel; he was one of the great many men whom Brighid Moynagh had seen, one of the number who was engaged in the defence of the Cahirmoy men who were charged with conspiracy. This young man had a dark, beetling face—the description came to her out of something she had read—and instead of the humour that other young men had he had this great flow of words that seemed able to destroy whatever thing they were turned against. He had dark unsatisfied eyes, and very often Brighid found them turned upon herself.

It was he who had written about the traditions of their part of the country in the journal that used to come to her mother's on Thursdays; it was he who had written the story about Castle Conquer that Francis Gillick had read out of the paper the

night he was back with them and when Owen was gone from the house. She had been pitying the girl in the story, Mary Cantillon, who had to lead the dance to Castle Conquer to get her lover liberated. But how much worse than that girl's was her own case now! Everyone might be proud of what Mary Cantillon did, but what she had to do would bring mockery and scorn upon her: she would have to stand up in the court and tell judge and jury and all the people that Francis Gillick was with her on the night that Jonathan Woulfe was shot to death.

It had been settled that she was to do this; she was to do this although Francis Gillick escaped them still and was not yet under arrest; she was to do this so that the charge of conspiracy against the men of Cahirmoy might be broken down. If the conspiracy charge was got rid of the charge of murder that might be brought against Francis Gillick on his arrest would not have much chance of being sustained.

She was in her uncle Owen's house. Owen had brought her to the solicitors, the barristers, the councillors, and all who were, with the help of one of the nationalist societies, fighting in defence of the Cahirmoy prisoners—or rather who were fighting the feudalism-garrison party in the name of the prisoners. Brighid had told her story to all of them, and had told them about Oona's giving the book to the Baccachs. Now one of them, a junior counsel, had come back to Owen's house with them. He was rehearsing for them now the procedure of the court.

"Yes, the Royal Arms is displayed within the

court as well as outside of it. There is the judge's seat," he went on, "under a canopy, high above the floor, and with the Royal Arms behind it. No people's judge he, nor no servant of the state; he is the Queen's man, deriving his jurisdiction from Her Majesty as surely as the judge who was a King's judge in the days of du Guesclin. The Clerk of the Crown and Peace preserves the link between this Queen's Justiciar, the judge of the Assize, and the people of the district. He will read the royal commission, and he will see to it that the dignitary now in office is no impostor, but a genuine crown judge, holding literally in his hands the royal seal. Nearly a thousand years ago, remember, when men travelled on horseback and on foot, through forests and across mountains, a king's judge would make his itinerary up to the Celtic marches, and, before holding his court, the king's permanent servant would insist upon seeing the royal seal, and would satisfy himself that the functionary stood in very truth for the crown. And in your court your Mr. Dobbyn, whom I well remember, will carry out the task that once was carried out by some Fitzadelm back in Norman times.

"Mr. O'Loghlen will be your defence, as you know. He has an Irish name, but he is Queen's Irish; all his connections are with the Castle. That is why he has been chosen. This is a serious case, men are on trial for their liberty, and you must get all the power that is normally on the government's side over to your own. The priest recommended your getting the Protestant and Unionist solicitor in the town. 'He may have a friend on the jury.'

Why not? The verdict is the thing. This is not a question of justice: that English government machine is there to convict, and it is our business to put as much sand in its cog-wheels as we can.

“ ‘Silence in the court!’ But there is no need for anyone to cry for silence. The Irish people have been watching this play since the judgment given at His Majesty’s Castle in Dublin in the Hilary Term of the third year of His Most Excellent Majesty, James the Second and set out in Norman-French and ordering that henceforth the law of Ireland should be the common law and chancery law of England. ‘Silence in the court,’ the Clerk of the Crown and Peace, calls, and he glides back quietly to reappear in a moment carrying a long white wand. Once on the judge’s dais he turns and waits until the Queen’s judge comes forward: he bows him into the court, with a low reverence, and once more he cries, ‘Silence in the court!’ Oh, this pageantry and show that still keeps the mark of the Norman’s power of impressing the folk! The judge is clad in his red robe, in his rich cassock, with flowing gown and costly ermine collar and cuffs.

“My lord is seated, and the counsel and the solicitors resume their seats. The judge’s registrar stands up. He will bow too, this Mr. Registrar, turning a half right turn to look towards the judge. It is all byplay to impress the poor agriculturalist. Having bowed he hands the commission with the royal seal to the Clerk of the Crown and Peace. Then a solemn-faced crier cries out three times, ‘Oyez, oyez, oyez,’ that the Irish folk may know that still the Norman bids them hear, for the Queen

speaks. The Clerk of the Crown and Peace rises and reads the commission of the judge of Assize, the commission of Oyer and Terminer and General Gaol Delivery.

"And the judge? I know him well and Ireland knows him well. He is in a political job for political services rendered. He covers his ignorance with low-Latin phrases and technical terms. Counsel will help him out. The Queen's Counsel now rises to his feet; he mentions your case, the state case; the judge looks as if he were hearing about it for the first time—all pretence; he had read the depositions; he has been working on them; he has some knowledge of the details of the case.

"You will notice us there. The wigs and gowns that we wear have a history. You may notice a little circular patch in the middle of the sergeant's wig. It is a tonsure, a cleric's tonsure. It smacks of our own idolatrous faith. Now how does it come into a court that reproves us for our idolatry?

"Long ago and in another country a Saxon thane might have suffered wrong from some King's man. What would the Saxon do about it? Go to the Priory and consult there with a man of his own race, the Prior or the Abbot. The churchman would strive to have justice done him. The Saxon's case would be argued. But how will Swyn argue it? He barely understands the Norman's speech. Well, the Abbot or the Lord Prior will aid him and will send out of the Abbey some young cleric, cunning in the law, who will plead for him. The young cleric, with his cleric's gown wrapped around him, will go into

the King's court. He will go there disguised, wearing a wig—and so our wig that shows the tonsure.

“The Queen's Counsels and the Sergeants wear gowns with a little lapel hanging down from the shoulders. We juniors wear the same robe, but over our shoulders is a thick mass of cloth that terminates in a little horn-shaped pocket which protrudes from the middle of the back. If you think fit you can slip a coin into that little pocket. Indeed, the reason why the pocket is there is to facilitate your giving a fee. For the Councillors, learned in the law, junior and senior, are not entitled to sue for fees. They who live by the law may bring no man to court to make him pay them for advice they have given. A man may casually drop something into that pocket, and if a counsel finds a coin there when he is disrobing, who will blame him for keeping what is found? But the counsel cannot even guess how that treasure made its way to his person. It is all part of the dignity of the law; all part of the show that the Normans brought into the system for the purpose of impressing the folk.

“And remember that those whom the Queen's Lord Chancellor and the Queen's Lords Justice deem fit and proper to be counsel learned in the law, may not give their advice for pelf. They shall wear gowns and bow; they shall rise and bow again. These things impress the folk, and the strongest legal system is the one that is fortified with pageantry—pageantry that attracts even when it is not understood. That is what the Normans right well comprehended.

“And now the question is whether the prisoners

will be liberated in a general gaol delivery, or whether, a true bill having been found against them, they will be put upon their trial for felony. To try this out the Grand Jury is summoned. The Clerk of the Crown and Peace reads their names from a list, and the men who form the Grand Jury answer to their names. They are mainly of the Englishry—landowners and their dependents, but now and again there is an O or a Mac representing some Celtic family that has been able to reach up to some property. As the names are called out everyone in the court is able to tell whether such one is likely to be for the Castle or for the people. Their names are shuffled in a box; the people look on thrilled by the drama of it. The Clerk of the Crown and Peace addresses the prisoners: ‘Do you challenge jointly?’ he asks them. One of us juniors will speak for the prisoners: we rise to say that each of the prisoners will challenge separately. The Clerk of the Crown and Peace then turns to the prisoners with the warning: ‘Prisoners, look to your challenge.’ He takes a card and calls a name. And now there is the challenging. You know the people who make up the Grand Jury: they cannot have sympathy with men who may be accused of threatening the stability of the feudal order. Some of them are challenged by us juniors for the prisoners, and they stand aside; none are challenged by the Crown: the Crown knows that whatever case it has is safe with every one of them. At last seventeen jurors are assembled.

“Later on there will be another jury and there will be more challenges. When the Petty Jury is assembled the Crown will do some challenging. The

prisoners are each entitled to twenty peremptory challenges, and as many more as they can show cause for. The Crown can challenge for ever. No one knows from what this right in favor of the Crown derives. There is no such right in England, and it seems opposed to the whole spirit of the British Constitution. But this is Ireland, and the British Constitution is often revised for us. The introduction of the Common Law of England was due to the rapacity of the Stuart and Williamite adventurers who framed the law to help them to hold what land their swords had won, and this right of challenge has been allowed since the days when the first Irish kern was arraigned before the jurors of the English and Norman Pale.

“A while ago prisoners found guilty of conspiracy would be hanged or transported across the seas. But jurors were becoming slow to convict when the penalty was so terrifying. Now conspiracy has been made a misdemeanour with a maximum penalty of ten years penal servitude. I am sure that the prisoners will be given the full ten years if we cannot break down the charge that is against them.

“And now we go back to the proceedings of the Grand Jury. They are assembled, seventeen men, and they are in their box. The foreman takes the oath as he has done many times before, for the attendance of these men at the assizes is part of their lives. He is spoken to—

“‘You, as Foreman of this Grand Inquest of Our Sovereign Lady the Queen, shall diligently inquire and true presentment make, of all such matters and things as shall be given you in charge, or shall other-

wise come to your knowledge, touching the present service. Counsel of Our Sovereign Lady the Queen, your fellows', and your own, you shall observe and keep secret. You shall present no one through envy, hatred or malice, neither shall you leave any one unrepresented through fear, favour, or affection, gain, reward, or the hope thereof; but, you shall present all things truly and indifferently, as they shall come to your knowledge, according to the best of your skill and understanding. So help you God.'

"The foreman kisses the book and sits down, and three by three his fellows lay hands on the gospel, and the Clerk swears them. The Clerk bows to the judge and informs him that the Grand Jury has been sworn, and the judge addresses them. He thanks the Grand Jury for their attendance, and he says some words to them concerning the case.

"The depositions are handed up to the Grand Jury—literally handed up, for a court understrapper places the file in a cleft stick, ten or twelve feet long, and thrusts it up to the Grand Jury box. They will retire to the jury room, I think. Will they throw out the indictment and bring the business to an end with the liberation of the prisoners, or will they bring in a true bill that will put the prisoners upon trial? I think they will bring in a true bill. Meanwhile the court waits their pleasure. And they keep the court waiting. They have become part of the Norman idea of impressing the crowd.

"They are back now in the Grand Jury box. The foreman looks around the court. He places the depositions and the finding in the cleft stick, and

these documents are put into the hands of the Clerk of the Crown and Peace. What announcement will the Clerk make when he looks over the finding? I rather think it will be 'True bill found.' The real trial then begins."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TRIAL

THE prisoner appeared in the dock. They had done something to him to have changed him so much—

*Oh, sweet were his words as the honey that
falls in the night,
And his young, smiling face, like the May
bloom, as fresh and as bright;
His eyes were like dew on the flower of the
sweet apple tree;
My heart's spring and summer, my Draherin
O Machree!*

She saw the spiked helmets of the constabulary-men who stood each side of him, their hands upon their carbines. She saw him with the spikes of the dock surrounding him, with clothes on that did not belong to him, with the life wrung out of his face. He was like a man disowned. It was his councillor who answered for him "Not Guilty."

He was told to sit down, and for the while he was sitting she saw only the top of his head. Before he had appeared Brighid Moynagh was there for hours, but one could have told her that she had been there for only the half of a half hour. It was all

vacancy about her. Judge, crier, clerk, the councillor who was for him and the Queen's Councillor who was against him, she saw them all, and she had hardly known the meaning of their appearances. But with Francis Gillick in the dock the full meaning of his trial was before her—

*My sister Mary heard the express;
She ran downstairs in her morning dress;
A hundred guineas she would lay down
To see me liberated in Wexford town.*

Now he was in the dock, and now the Queen's Councillor was telling the judge and jury about the case, telling them that the prisoner was charged with a crime that threatened law and order, and the security of their hearths and homes. Then came the witnesses. First two constabulary-men, who, one after the other, told how they had arrested the prisoner, and then a man who told how he had found the body in the field and had identified it as Jonathan Woulfe's. He was riding by when he saw the body and went over to it. It was eight o'clock in the morning. He was a young man, a rider at the races, and Brigid remembered that she had seen him before.

It was the informer who came next. There would have been no case against Francis Gillick only that there was an informer. The man was Hugh Jinks, the head of the Baccach clann. He told the judge and jury how he had joined a secret combination, the National Defence Society. Then a book was handed to him, and he said that he had seen

that book before and had handled it, and that it was the book that had the names of the members of the Society in it, and the names, too, of the men who were condemned to death by the members of the secret combination. The book was handed to the jury: they read the names of Francis Gillick and Jonathan Woulfe.

The names of landlords, land-agents, stewards, bailiffs, rent-warners, process-servers—all were written there; they were to be killed as the chance came. The prisoner was the head of the secret combination, the informer said.

The book they were handling was a book that Brighid Moynagh knew well—it was Francis Gillick's note-book. It was the book that Oona had brought to the Baccachs, and that she and Oona had gone in search of afterwards. The Councillor that was on Francis Gillick's side cross-questioned the informer. But Hugh Jinks denied that the book had ever been brought to him by any person. He had seen it and had handled it, he said, but only in a meeting in a lodge.

A constabulary-man came after the informer. He told judge and jury that he had found the book in a lime-kiln; he had gone to the lime-kiln because he knew that the meetings of the National Defence Society used to be held there. He had found the book behind loose stones. The Councillor tried to make him contradict himself when he cross-questioned him, but the constabulary-man was able to tell the same story over again without the difference of a word. He was a young man, this constabulary-

man, and Brighid had often met him as he went with another constable on his patrol.

The book that Oona had brought to the Baccachs was found behind stones in a lime-kiln—that was what the judge and jury would believe!

Then Jonathan Woulfe's son came on the witness-table. He had seen his father, he told judge and jury, on the day of the night he was killed. His father was in the street of Cahirmoy talking to a man. The man was the prisoner in the dock. The Councillor who was on Francis Gillick's side cross-questioned him. He had not seen any one else with his father and the prisoner. There might have been a young woman standing by. When he came up there was a young woman with the prisoner. This was the first time she had been brought into the story: Brighid's heart beat, and she put her hand to her side.

And then there was a man from Castle Conquer. He told judge and jury that he had seen the prisoner talking to the steward on the grounds of the Castle. He had seen the prisoner at another time: it was when they had gone to evict a tenant. The prisoner was then struck by one of the men Jonathan Woulfe had with him. He, the prisoner, was there at the eviction, threatening them.

Then the Queen's Councillor said, "Here we rest our case, my lord."

The dusty-footed people, who were huddled together at the back of the court, shifted about and whispered and engaged in arguments with one another; the townspeople who were in the gallery

above trampled out and trampled in again. All were at liberty to move about and loosen their tongues for the court had adjourned for luncheon. Brigid Moynagh did not go out. She kept her place; as far as she could she would keep from the people and their curiosity.

Solicitors and junior counsel made their way back into court. They sat at tables, looked through papers, and entered into colloquys with one another. Amongst them was the dark-faced junior, John Fitzsimmons, who had talked with Brigid Moynagh in her uncle's house, giving her an account of the court-proceedings. He looked at her now; as he met her gaze he colored a little.

John Fitzsimmons was remotely connected with the country around Castle Conquer. His family had come from thereabouts, and his imaginative life went into that collection of legends and traditions of the place that he was making. Brigid Moynagh embodied for him the poetry of the generations he recalled; it was she who had often come into a story—she with the bright hair that marked her as belonging to the kindly race of Heber, and yet with something of a madonna in her face. Sententiously he thought of her now, saying to himself that in that dusty, reeking courthouse, and amongst all those self-seekers and posturers, the curious and the abject ones, she was appealing in her beauty and in her consciousness of her lonely battle. Her secret would be given out in that public and profane confessional. "She is next to a culprit," he said to himself, "she is a witness for the defence of a man who has the supporters of law and order against him." Then he

looked towards his chief who had come in, for the court was re-assembling. Would that full-lipped, handsome man, with the dark importuning eyes, shield her and guide her as she should be guided and shielded?

Francis Gillick's counsel had the Clerk of the Crown and Peace talking to him as his junior looked towards him meditatively. Then to the Clerk of the Crown and Peace, Henry Dobbyn, well-groomed, full of his conspicuous office, John Fitzsimmons gave some of his sententious thought.

"There is the man who takes the place of some dead and gone Fitzadlem as the link between the people and the Queen's Justiciar. Not that there is anything of the Norman about Henry Dobbyn. No Norman he, this love-child of Squire Follaird, if one can call that love that prompted the ruin of a pretty village girl. But Mr. Henry Dobbyn has been able to make people forget his origin. That old Puritan, Erasmus Smith, had left thousands of pounds in the seventeenth century for the endowment of godly schools in the island, and the like of Henry Dobbyn might go through one of them. Then there were bursaries in Trinity College, in far-away Dublin, did the right person nominate. The squire is one of the right people. After the university, Henry Dobbyn goes through the King's Inns, is called to the Bar, and his father finds this sinecure office for him.

"He and our leading counsel have something to say to each other. This is a serious case, a state trial, involving, no doubt, many nice points of procedure. No wonder they converse so earnestly! But not one syllable of legal phraseology enters into

the conversation that I can hear. Henry Dobbyn is letting our leading counsel know about a new trout pool he has discovered. And our leading counsel is an eager auditor. Yes, certainly he will come down after the term! Mr. Dobbyn must show him this valuable find."

The leading counsel turned his fine eyes to his junior. The junior approached him with a memorandum. Once again the old fellow in the black gown appeared. "Silence in the court," he cried, and then he went bowing before the returning judge. There was silence and the court stood up. Again the judge made his stately entrance; again he took the high seat. "Honi soit qui mal y pense" the Norman legend read above it. He sat there in his flowing red robe, his full wig, and his ermine.

Brigid Moynagh heard the Councillor speaking in Francis Gillick's defence. His voice seemed at a distance; at a distance, too, were the things he told of; she could barely connect them with Francis Gillick—with Francis Gillick standing there in the dock—

*The country was bewailing my doleful situation,
But still I'd expectation the maid would set me free.*

If she spoke now, and spoke so that all would have to know that she was telling the truth, he would step out from that dock, and the constabulary with their carbines would be beside him no more! And she herself would be away from the killing and prisoning thing! The prayers of a decade of the rosary

went through her mind; she prayed, reminding herself of one of the Sorrowful Mysteries. The bright day that was outside shone into the court; it was one of the long days. She saw faces that she knew; all were looking at her, for they knew that she, who knew so much, would be called when the Councillor's speech was finished.

And then she was standing on the witness-table, in view of the judge and jury, and the Councillor was speaking to her quiet and slow. He was asking her if she remembered the morning of the thirteenth of July. And did she remember leaving the house early that morning? He was asking her if the prisoner was with her that morning. She answered "Yes" to all these questions.

And then she knew that her mind was collected now, and that she could go on answering the questions that might be put to her. What did she see as she came down the field to the road? She saw the body of Jonathan Woulfe. Was she surprised to see the dead body there? She was surprised. She would not have crossed the field if she knew that there was a dead body there. Was the man who was with her, the prisoner, surprised? He was. If he had known that there was a dead body there, did she think he would have taken her that way? No, he would not have gone with her that way if he had known about it.

How was the body lying?

She described how the body was lying; she described the silk hat lying away from the head. She knew she was describing it just as if she saw it before

her, and she knew that the judge and jury were listening to her intently.

The Councillor asked her how long she had known Francis Gillick, the prisoner. She told how long. He asked her where they had come from that morning when they saw the body lying in the field. They came from the house, she said. For how long had he been with her? All of the night, she said. She lifted up her head and said: "He was with me from dark until daylight."

In the course of the night, had she heard a shot fired? She had heard it; it was near the middle of the night. Was the prisoner with her when the shot was fired? They were together then, she said.

Would she describe how he had come to the house? She told how she had seen him in the town and how she had asked him to come to the house. They were sweethearts, she said, although no one knew about it. He had come, and after he had been in the house awhile they had heard about the arrests of the men who were his friends. She was frightened for him. She thought somebody might come to the house to take him. They went outside. When they came back she could not bear to let him go. They were together when the shot was fired, and they were together for the rest of the night.

He ceased to ask her questions. He turned to the jury as if to say "That is the testimony that will take yonder man out of the dock." She stood waiting.

Then, from the other side, the Queen's Councillor came at her like a cold, wind-blown rain. She saw his black robe and the string of his wig. His face

was like a frightening vizard that a child puts on, so tightly-drawn, so deathly-colored was it. She could not see his eyes for they were behind thick glasses.

Who had told her about the arrest of the Cahir-moy men? Martin Jordan, an old man who had come into the house. At the time this old man was in the house was the accused in the house too? He was. Did Martin Jordan see and speak to him? No, for Francis Gillick was in the other room then.

He would ask her a question slowly, as if he had something behind the question. Then he would come quickly at her with another question, and his glassy eyes would stare at her. He would drag, drag at her—like a gander, she thought, that keeps close to a child's skirts to nip and frighten her. And now she thought that if she could not keep him off, that if she could not turn him aside, all would be lost for her.

He wanted her to say that Francis Gillick had such influence over her that he could make her do anything for him, tell any story for him. He wanted her to agree that Francis Gillick had come after the shot had been fired, that he had made her take him in, and that he had prevailed upon her to say that he had been in the house with her the whole of the night. She knew that if he could take her own story from her, and put another story in her mouth, the judge and jury would condemn the man in the dock, Francis Gillick, her own man—

*Since they have judged me so, to the Law-board
I must go,*

*And there to take farewell of my friends and
my country;
May the Angels shining bright receive my soul
this night,
And convey it to the sight of the Blessed
Trinity.*

"Come. You heard the shot. You wakened up. Then the prisoner came to the door."

"That is a leading question. I object, my lord," said the Councillor on Francis Gillick's side.

But Brighid Moynagh answered him. "No. He came long before that. He came in the early evening."

"How do you know it was in the early evening?" the Queen's Councillor asked her.

She said: "If I was a Councillor I wouldn't think of asking that question. I was watching so hard for him coming that I could tell you everything that was happening outside while I was watching."

"Perhaps it was disappointment that made you see things so sharply," he asked her.

"If you like me to say it," she said, "every minute I watched for him and he didn't come was a disappointment to me. But he came; it was before dark that he came, and every minute after that we were together."

He dragged, dragged at her still, but no change in what she had said could be made by him. Like a wall it stood, a wall of defence for Francis Gillick. The man with the blinded eyes, for all that he was a Sergeant-at-Law, could not overthrow it.

"You may stand down," he said to her.

Then came the speech from the Councillor of Francis Gillick's side. There was nothing to connect the prisoner with the mysterious murder, he said, nothing even from the beginning. And after the girl's testimony he was completely out of the case. It was late when the Councillor finished his speech; then the jury were told that the Queen's Councillor would speak to them in the morning.

In the morning, standing at the back of the court with her uncle Owen, Brigid Moynagh heard the Queen's Councillor speak against Francis Gillick. He told the jury that there had been presented to them the evidence of a conspiracy with a murder coming out of it. The accused, he said, was a stranger in their country, a 'man who' had come amongst them from a strange country. Life was cheap where he had come from, and a crime like murder was not odious. They had evidence that he had formed a dangerous combination in their midst, a combination that was directed against property and those who held property or who acted in the defence of property. He was not content, this accused man, to agitate. He was resolute to act. He had appeared at an eviction, and there he had threatened men who were under the protection of the law. For some reason the faithful steward of Mr. de Courcey had been marked by him. The prisoner had sought him out. In the grounds of the Castle, on the streets of the town, he had approached him and had engaged him in discourse. He had accosted him on the day of the night of the murder. He had already marked the steward for murder—that had

been shown in the book that had been placed before the jury. He had fled after the murder, and only the most resolute search on the part of the Constabulary had led to his discovery. In the interest of law and order he asked for a verdict against the accused.

As for the young woman who had sought to prove an alibi for the prisoner, it was doubtful if she should have been permitted to give testimony at all. Had she been the man's lawful wife she would not have been permitted to give testimony. And was one who, according to her own confession, had an illicit relation with him, to be given a privilege that was denied to a wife? It was plain that the influence of the accused over the witness was such that she could be made tell any story on his behalf that might be invented to shield him. Hers was the only word that could save him. She condemned herself in giving such evidence as she had given, but that was no reason why sympathy should be given to the man who had caused her to condemn herself. If this murder went unpunished who, in the disturbed state of the country, would be safe? Who might not be the next to meet the bullet of the midnight assassin? The prisoner had gone out of his way to cultivate the acquaintance of Jonathan Woulfe that he might the better encompass his death—Jonathan Woulfe was murdered as the representative of a landowner whose legitimate rights over his own property had already been challenged by the accused.

The judge gave his charge to the jury. It was a grave, a very grave case, he said. The witness for the prisoner was deeply interested in saving him;

the jury would have to take that into consideration in examining her testimony. On the other hand, the evidence she had given was singularly full and clear. The judge said also that if the prisoner should be acquitted of this charge there was a distinct possibility that he would be put on trial on another charge.

The jury retired to their room. Brighid Moynagh waited for the verdict at the back of the court. Barefooted men and women who had come from the mountainous parts of the country to watch this trial whispered and talked around her. At last the jury returned. "What say you, gentlemen of the jury—guilty or not guilty?" "Not guilty." So the trial was over. But again Brighid Moynagh had lost the meaning of what was going on before her, what those twelve figures meant, and what the solemn judge in the high seat stood for.

She could not see the prisoner in the dock. Owen whispered to her that he had been taken down and was being brought again into the gaol. The people moved out of the court. Councillors' clerks went away; the judge disappeared. Owen brought Brighid over to where the junior counsel, John Fitzsimmons, was waiting for them. "Will Francis Gillick be let free?" she asked him. "No," he told her. "He will be put upon his trial with others on the charge of conspiracy."

CHAPTER XXIX

DISCOVERIES

ON THE day following Francis Gillick's trial Jonathan Woulfe's son, Mountford Woulfe, walked out of the village of Cahirmoy with two constabulary-men: the authorities thought it proper to assume that an attack might be made on Judkin de Courcey's residence, and these two were the special constables that had been placed on guard at Conquer Castle.

The constabulary-men sauntered on with the groom beside them; they were enjoying their stroll at the end of the August day; they were enjoying the chat that went on between the pair of them: it was good to show off before this lout who went beside them—to show off their status as uniformed men and men of the world as they talked about the greatly-advertised athletic tournaments they had taken part in, and about how much they had paid for suits of clothes and pipes and tobacco, and bantered each other about this girl and that girl. Jonathan Woulfe's son's gorge rose against them because of their free and easy manners and their condescension towards himself, because of their swagger uniforms and the money they had in their pockets, because of their status and their prospects. But there was information that he wanted to get out

of them. Wasn't there compensation that might be claimed by him on account of the death of his father? To be sure there was if it was proved that his death was the result of a conspiracy: then it would be the same as malicious damages and the county would have to pay him—that is, if a claim was not put in first by Judkin de Courcey for compensation because of the loss of his servant—but even in that case he could get compensation. He had better put in his claim. . . .

There was a certain grotesqueness about Jonathan Woulfe's son: it was in his Punch-like nose and his wide and thickened ears. About him there was an habitual sullenness. His mother had been a servant at de Courcey's and he had been brought up within the walls of Castle Conquer. His father had gone there as a refuge from the world: he had been a tutor, but the mockery of the cubs he had to teach in the houses of land-agents and lesser landowners had driven him out of the tutoring business. Jonathan Woulfe had made attempts to tutor his son. Often, by the light of the lamp in the dishevelled house that they lived in, he had the hulking boy read to him, or write at his dictation, or copy, to improve his handwriting, the copper-plate lines that he prided himself on writing. Mountford Woulfe got some additional learning out of these exercises with his father—his father even attempted to teach him Latin—but between them there was never any approach to a mood of appreciation. To Jonathan Woulfe his son was base born and a discredit; to Mountford Woulfe his father was a wearying and be-mocked person who occasionally tried to master

him. They were both aliens in their world, and yet they could not join together; they were repugnant to each other.

The object of the tuitions was to prepare Mountford for an examination that would let him enter the constabulary as a cadet. But in the year that the examination was to take place father and son had a fight that went to the extreme of violence. Jonathan Woulfe happened to be sullen with drink he had taken the day before; he berated his son on his inferior abilities, on his awkwardness and his unprepossessing looks. His son listened to him for a while with a flush upon his sullen face; then he struck the table and overturned the lamp. Instantly they were at each other; he ground his hard knuckles into his father's face. There were no more tuitions for a while: then it was understood that Mountford would try to enter the constabulary, this time as a common constable. The studies were resumed, but he never got to the point where he could present himself for examination.

Jonathan Woulfe had taken the unremunerative stewardship at Judkin de Courcey's as a place of refuge. At first he got pay with a certain regularity. But as Judkin de Courcey grew older it became harder and harder to get any money out of him. Jonathan Woulfe's way was to go to de Courcey after "gale days" when he had got in his rents, or after fair-days when he had sold cattle, and squabble with him, threaten him, and try every way to wear him down; he would weep tears of self-pity and humiliation; then he would bargain with him as he drew money from the old man, pound by pound and

shilling by shilling. After that he would be able to hold his head up in Cahirmoy; he would have the satisfaction of getting blazing drunk in Mark Bohoon's. But it became more and more difficult, and at last it became out of the question, to get money directly out of Judkin de Courcey. By that time, however, the steward had secured for himself a levy upon funds that he received or paid out—unacknowledged and varying commissions on produce sold from the farm or wages paid to men employed at Castle Conquer. So it was for some years before Jonathan Woulfe's tragic death; in addition he had some pay from local lodges on behalf of which he wrote and engrossed addresses and petitions.

And Mountford Woulfe? His father's death left him with a sense of vacancy rather than with a sense of loss; he would hear that resonant voice no more, he would see no more the figure that walked up or down the avenue with head held up, he would see his father no more shambling about the room in disgust, or carrying on operations that would bring him the pounds and shillings that were half-allowed him by Judkin de Courcey. But as it was before his father's death, so it was now; Mountford Woulfe's thoughts worked around one interest, were under one influence—the woman whose groom he was, Judkin de Courcey's wife with her lures and her mockeries.

Going up the drive-way they met a stranger—a tall man with a hawk-like face and something military about him. The constabulary-men saluted him; he was an officer in the force, an inspector, and was visiting the guard there—Harkness was his name.

The constabulary-men talked about him—about his rank, about the hundreds a year he had for a salary, about risky things that were rumoured about him in connection with women. Oh, a gentleman and the son of a gentleman! This phrase used by one of them grated on Mountford Woulfe, the resentful servant.

He went into the kitchen and ate his meal there—potatoes and cabbage and cold bacon. He smoked a pipe and hammered on the table with his knuckles. That compensation that he could claim! He would have money; he would appear beside her in a fine coat, and she would speak to him and he would speak to her as they went together on their horses. What ladies and gentlemen had to say to each other they would say. She would urge her horse forward. He would pursue her; he would lift her off the horse, his hands would go over every bit of her body; he would carry her into the shade of the trees! Once he had jumped down, seized the reins of her horse, told her he would force her off her mount and take her in his arms. She had laughed at him; they had stayed there, she laughing and he threatening until it was time to go back; then he had mounted his horse and had rode back with her. This time he would not do that, by God! Oh, but she was ready to go off sweethearting with someone! She had said to him one nice day when they were out together "If there was a fellow with me now!" And the way she said that! He clenched his hands as he remembered her laugh. She would often let him ride side by side with her, and she would lean over

until her shoulder touched his, and she would hum that song—

If ever I marry, I marry,—
I'll have a horse for to ride,
An hussar by my side,
And a servant to harry, to harry!

Those were her stays hanging on the line outside the window, and that was her petticoat. He gloated over the sight of them as he looked across the potato-peelings, his jaw hanging. She was upstairs now, reading books that put devilment into her mind, and to-morrow—no, not to-morrow, the day after to-morrow—she'd ride out with him. She'd know that he was a changed man, and a man who was going to be more changed; a man with money who'd go or stay, just as he thought fit. He'd take her down on the ground! There was more in him than anybody knew about, and she would soon know that!

He smoked his pipe and thought about entertaining himself. Well, it would be a moonlit night, and he might go out and shoot rabbits. A gun! He knew where he could get one—there were guns kept in the gate lodge.

So he went down the avenue and came to the gate lodge where one of the under-bailiffs lived. The door was open and he entered the house. No one there! Yes, at the fire there was the old fellow, Sylvester Simm. But the old fellow said nothing to him; he looked at him only, as Mountford Woulfe took the gun down from the wall.

Holding the gun he turned to go out when he saw the under-bailiff, "Pucks," standing in the doorway. Instinctively Mountford Woulfe raised the gun that he had in his hands. The man before him looked frightful with his tangled and overgrown beard, with his blood-shot eyes, and his odd, lurching movements. Mountford Woulfe knew that the man was not drunk; there was something about him that was frightening.

"Don't raise that gun at me," he shouted. "It was with that gun that I killed your father."

He ran out of the house as he said that, and, pulling the door, shut it behind him. "Did you hear what he said?" Mountford Woulfe muttered to Sylvester Simm. "I didn't hear what he said—I declare to goodness above, I didn't hear a word he said," said Sylvester Simm. "He's that way for days and days; he's in the horrors of drink, I think, and if I didn't come in to look after him he'd be running like a wild man through the wood."

"He said he killed my father; not moonlighters, but him."

"I tell you I didn't hear what he said."

"Pucks" appeared at the window; he pushed it open with his two hands and gaped at them there. "Didn't he say he gave me my money when he didn't give it to me at all? And he abused me when I talked to him, and the two of us going home after the march. The humpback son of a hangman abused me, and he standing there in the field with the gentleman's hat on. I gave him a barrel out of that gun. Put it down, I tell you. You're his son, and you might kill me with it." He drew himself away

from the window; when Mountford Woulfe came out of the house Pucks, the under-bailiff, was running down the moonlit road.

"Did you hear what he said—did you hear what he said?" Jonathan Woulfe's son shouted into the house.

"What could I hear with the uproar that ye are all making?" Sylvester Simm answered guardedly.

He would go to the constabulary that were stationed in the other lodge. He was tingling now with excitement: he would be on the hunt with the constabulary-men; they would go scouring the country. "Pucks" wouldn't be able to escape them. They would come upon him, as he was cowering under some dark wall; there would be shouts and cries as they rushed upon him and overpowered him. Then they would take him off and put him in the gaol. And he, the aid of the constabulary, would see the cell and the turnkey and the prisoner left on the bench there, with his hands in the handcuffs. Then there would be the long walk back in the middle of the night, all with their minds on what they had done, with the constabulary-men talking while he went on beside them.

They looked at him coolly when he entered the lodge they were stationed in. The two constabulary-men were seated at the table, their belts loosened, with the weekly paper spread out before them. It had an account of the last day's proceedings against Francis Gillick.

"Come out and search for 'Pucks,' the under-bailiff."

"We're not here to help you to look for your under-bailiffs."

"He's the man that killed my father."

"Well, are you going to lay an information against him?"

"He killed my father, he killed my father," Mountford Woulfe repeated. "He told me he killed my father."

One of the constabulary-men said to him: "That under-bailiff that you're talking about is a mad man. He has gone mad here. We'll have him taken to the asylum. That's all that's about him."

"He killed my father. It can be proved by the gun he had."

"Can it indeed?" said the constable who had been speaking to him. "Can it indeed now?"

The other spoke to him authoratively. "Look here, my fine young fellow, do you want to get compensation, or do you not? If you do, you won't want it said that your father was killed by the under-bailiff in some private dispute of your own. No Grand Jury will give you compensation for that. Do you hear me now?"

"But didn't he kill my father?"

"The man's mad and doesn't know what he's saying. We're going to put him in a place where they'll take care of him. Do you understand me now?"

He understood: there would be no chase of "Pucks." Let him go then.

Jonathan Woulfe's son still half believed that the man who was tried for his father's murder, that the men who would be tried for a conspiracy that re-

lated to it, had some share of guilt. Having all that procedure against them involved them in it to his mind. Compensation would be given him for not interfering in the trial for conspiracy that was coming on; at the same time he would be an ally; he would in some way be one of the powers that gave indemnity to some and penalized others. He sat for a while with the constabulary and drank porter out of their can. But they did not press him to stay, when he said good-night, after he had taken a mug-full. He was a dull fellow, and there was something forbidding about his sullen looks—so judged the two constabulary-men.

As for Mountford Woulfe, he went into the house that he lived in, and, sitting down at the table that his father used to sit at, he thought and thought about him. He was dead, gone like the old table that used to have his books on it; he had such a look of command, and he had a head that was packed full of learning: but he was dead and gone now and there was no more about him. There wasn't fair play in that—he should be remembered for something—that much compensation was due to him, something in the mind of Jonathan Woulfe's son insisted.

He remembered this about his father: one night they were both at this table, and he was being taught some lesson; there was civility between them: this civility was because he was doing well at the lesson, or else he was doing well at the lesson because there was this civility between him and his father. The lesson ended and he felt neither wearied nor sub-

dued. Then his father had gone to the trunk and had taken a book out of it. But it was not a lesson-book that he kept covered with paper, and that he had evidently paid a lot of money for. He had watched his father unwrap the paper and open the book. He read to him out of it. He sat over there while he was reading, and the lamplight was upon his forehead.

It wasn't a lesson and it wasn't a story. It was about a woman who was called Joan of Arc. His father read out to him how she was tried before judges, and how she was put into prison. And still the persecution of her did not stop. She was to be burnt alive. But his father did not come to that part. He read where she had to submit to be examined by women. And then he stood up and went walking about the room. He was crying as he walked about, and when he sat down at the table again he put his hands under his head and sobbed. Mountford Woulfe remembered that he had watched the tears fall down his father's face. And then his father had got up and had walked up and down the room again.

That book would still be in the trunk, he thought. He went over to where the trunk was, opened it, and searched amongst the shabby things that were there. But the book about Joan of Arc was not there any longer. Mountford Woulfe was surprised at not finding it: he thought now that that hidden book should have been kept by his father.

He smoked again, and then he went and lay on his bed. And still he thought upon his father. The

worms were eating their way through his coffin now. His coffin! . . .

* * * * *

Brighid Moynagh after the trial went back to her uncle Owen's. The place he had started business in was in a town in the east, near the sea. Owen was settled now and his business was beginning to get under way.

As for Brighid, her gravest trial was over; Francis Gillick had been saved from death. Also she had spoken the words that had cut her off from her mother and from all her former life. Never in her life would she have to face such a trial again.

But there would be another, if a less terrible trial—the trial that would decide whether Francis Gillick would be let out, or whether he would be separated from her by a sentence that would mean years and years in prison for him. The prisoners were still implicated in the murder of Jonathan Woulfe; the evidence against them was in the book that the constabulary declared they had found in the lime-kiln, and her evidence and Oona's evidence were all that the defence had against the prosecutor's charge. John Fitzsimmons told her that the constabulary of Cahirmoy had been working through Hugh Jinks to get a conviction for conspiracy against Francis Gillick and the others for some time before the murder: Hugh Jinks would get pay for his testimony and a passage to America for himself and his family; the defence knew this, but they could do nothing to bring it out into the

clear daylight, and the jury would be decidedly against the men who, as it would be shown, had formed a combination against the landowning interest.

So Brighid Moynagh prepared herself for the new trial. She was glad she was in a strange town, and she was glad she could be by the sea; she was left to herself and she could build up a resolution to face whatever life might be hers after the trial. Sometimes she would sit down on the common, at some unvisited place where the thistles grew, and, with the bleak sea before her, sing to herself some lively and defiant song.

From her mother she had had no direct communication. Honor had written to Owen; it was a letter about her daughter, and she wrote as if she were completely alienated from her. Brighid had expected nothing different from her mother, but yet this letter left her for hours in the misery of the rejected.

Oona she had seen: on the day of the trial they were together for a while; Brighid cleared away some of Oona's agitation, and Oona told Brighid about the happenings at home since her going away. Michael Paralon was with them now. And Brighid knew, from what Oona told her, that their mother was facing her world with a pride greater than she had ever before assumed.

Considine Gilroy was another she had heard from. He had come to Owen's to join in the conference that was to make a defence for his kinsman, Francis Gillick. Brighid found herself talking to him at length about her own and Francis's con-

cerns, about the plans for the defence, and about what she might do in the future. With his long, horse-like face, with his expressionless eyes that were so close together, with his jaws that were hairy rather than bearded, Considine Gilroy was singularly unprepossessing. But he had rectitude—that was plain to be seen—and he would abuse no one's confidence. Brighid heard from this envoy tidings of Francis Gillick that were new to her; also she got from him an inkling of the way she herself was regarded by the people of the countryside; she was spoken of with sympathy by all of them, he assured her.

She used to take walks upon a common that went by the sea—a common on which geese and goats and donkeys grazed—and look out on the unfamiliar channel, and watch the strange steamers that came to the river mouth, with their smoking chimneys and their odd-looking paddle-boxes. And one day, when she was coming back from her walk and had got into the street in the middle of the town, she was caught by some excitement in a throng, and found herself standing before a building that had lately been raised. She stopped and looked on. A carriage with a pair of beautiful horses had halted before the building, and between the carriage and the building, over the sidewalk and going up the steps, there was a red carpet. Brighid knew what this meant; the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was present; he had passed from that carriage into that building.

He was higher than all the judges of the land!

How strange it was, she thought, that she could lay eyes upon him here. Maybe something would happen that would bring her face to face with that high personage! Maybe she could say a word to him that would lead to a free pardon for Francis Gillick and the men who were being charged with him. With a beating heart she stood there in the throng. The Lord Lieutenant was within the new building; the people were waiting to see him come down the steps and over the red carpet that was between his carriage and the door of the hall. He stayed within while an address was being read to him. One by one people drew out of the throng and went away; only the resolute loyalists remained—old men, alien to her as she knew in every outlook on life, and odd-looking women who had brought tracts to hand to the people. They stayed, and their faces were shining as at an approach to their idol. She stayed on and on with them. She did not dare move lest the chance of something—she knew not what—should come when she was not there. And then the door of the building opened and a gentleman appeared; he had a broad ribbon around his neck with a medal on it. Brighid knew that he was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He came down the steps covered with the red carpet and he was in his carriage before the cheering began. He was bowing to everyone. It seemed to Brighid that he looked straight at her. Oh, if she could only move towards him! If she had something written that she could hand him! People handed kings, and the men who stood with kings, papers with what they wanted

written on them. Her heart was beating and the blood was in her face.

"There is an extraordinary pretty girl over there," said His Excellency, looking across the old men and the loyalist women to where Brighid Moynagh stood. He said this to his aide-de-camp while there was an intermission in his bowing-performance.

"Quite beautiful, I think," said the aide-de-camp. "I never saw such beautiful hair."

"Typically Irish, that face of hers, don't you think?" said the Viceroy.

"I should say so. And yet how seldom one sees a face like that."

"Begad, I wish something would bring her over here to the carriage," said the Viceroy.

"Perhaps she is going to draw a petition from her bosom and hand it to your Excellency," said his aide-de-camp.

"I should like to have a chance of doing something for her—that's because she signifies Ireland, don't you know," said the Viceroy.

"Stop, man!" said his aide-de-camp. "Dublin Castle will overhear you."

The Viceroy bowed again; the horses dashed off; the crowd moved away; Brighid Moynagh was left standing there. The chance had not come, and now the blood was all gone from her face.

* * * * *

It was that evening—the evening of the day that Brighid Moynagh had had her glimpse of the Lord

Lieutenant—that Mountford Woulfe was confronted by the confessed murderer of his father. The next day “Pucks” the under-bailiff was nabbed in some den; he was brought to Castle Conquer and he was kept in custody in the gate-lodge until a barred van with keepers came to take him off; there was a struggle to get the wretch into the van, and Mountford Woulfe, getting much elation out of it, pushed and pulled and helped to pitch him in. The keepers hired him as an aid, and the groom, a propensity of his thereby gratified, rode beside the van that had a man shut in.

He had a liking for walls and the sight of barred doors, and after the pinioned “Pucks” had been taken through the wide gate of the asylum he hung around to look at the place, and to exchange comments with men who had the jobs of guarding and repressing. He thought that a position here would be congenial, and he thought that sometimes he might look for one. He talked to a man who was at watch at the gate, and he received a crown in payment for his help and attendance. Later he mounted his horse and rode back to Castle Conquer.

To-morrow would be the day that he would ride out with Judkin de Courcey’s wife. He checked the horse and went slowly that he might think of her. To-morrow he would ride—by her side—just like this. She would speak to him and would laugh as she spoke. Once she had told him to get down off his horse and pick flowers for her. He had brought the flowers to her—primroses they were—in his hat, and she had pelted him with them. He had twisted her wrist for that; not much, but she had

felt it and her hand was limp on the rein. He would take her this way to-morrow; there was a wood with bluebells—thousands and thousands of bluebells under the trees. Maybe she would tell him to bring her bluebells, and maybe she would take them from him. Why should she always be mocking him, Mountford Woulfe thought as he rode along, his big knuckled hands on the reins of his horse.

He saw two ahead of him; they had horses, but they were walking side by side. He knew them, for one was Judkin de Courcey's wife, and the other was the man he had taken such a sour dislike to when he had met him on the drive-way, Harkness, the inspector who had visited the constabulary at the Castle.

He was in a fury of resentment, and yet he rejoiced that he had caught them together. They were not only riding together, they were walking together, they had had the opportunity of putting their arms around each other, of embracing. How did he get her to come with him like that? These officers had ways with women—they learnt about them in books; there was that book that his father had and that he had never looked into—*Ovid, the Art of Love*. He would not ride forward and catch up on them—something in his groom's training prevented his doing that. He kept after them, however. Then he came on a bye-way that he knew. He would cut up this way and come out further up on the road. He urged his horse on and came out at a place that was far ahead.

They were not in sight when he came out on the main road. He waited with the hedge between him

and anyone who might be down the road. At last they came along. They stopped while he watched them. They looked up and down the road. They clasped each other. It was not the first embrace, Mountford Woulfe knew, as he watched the man lift the woman up on her horse.

When they came to the corner of the road Mountford Woulfe was waiting for them. Mrs. de Courcey saw him. "What brings you here?" she asked, facing his savage look. Then she spoke across her shoulder to Harkness. "Here is my groom waiting for me. Come." She drew him with a turn of her head and went on with her cavalier.

Mountford Woulfe followed. There were fern-marks on her dress; they showed she had been on the ground. When he saw those marks he pitched and his horse pitched on and came near the two riders. Harkness turned his head—he had steely eyes and his face was slightly pocked. "He is drunk, that fellow," he said.

"It may be so," said Judkin de Courcey's wife.

They said no more; they rode on with the groom keeping close to them. As they came near the gate of Castle Conquer, Harkness turned and said, "And now, my man, I want to know whether you are dogging us or attending us."

"I'll give you my answer," said the groom coming up threateningly to him.

"Ride up the drive-way with me, Mr. Harkness," said Judkin de Courcey's wife.

But Mountford Woulfe rode his horse between Harkness and the gateway. The woman was within the gateway now and the men were outside.

"I'll pay you out, my lady," said Mountford Woulfe. "You want a gentleman and the son of a gentleman to huggle you, do you? I'll pay you out. I was where I saw something. I'll pay you out."

"Chastise him, Mr. Harkness," said the lady, and she rode up the drive-way.

"But he's your groom," cried the officer. He lifted his whip, however.

But Mountford Woulfe was off his horse, and he had gripped him with his gaoler's grip. He tore him off the horse, tearing the buttons off Harkness's clothes. There was a fight and it was with bare knuckles. Harkness put his back to the wall, and then he made enough recovery to go on fighting coolly. Old Judkin de Courcey who had been prowling around the grounds came to the gateway and looked on. Harkness was outmatched in strength and in savagery of attack: he kept defending himself, however, until the groom drew off from him.

"Who are you beating—is it a poacher?" asked Judkin de Courcey. And then he said, "Bring the horse in; it's my belief that you've been striking a gentleman." Mountford Woulfe led his horse in and Mr. Harkness mounted his horse and went off.

He brought the horse as far as the stable-door. But that is all that he would do; he would not put the horse in his stall nor rub him down. He would let it all go to hell. With all their police and all their watchers he was going to make them lose on the head of this! They wanted to keep up their end by letting people think that agitators had killed his father! He'd knock that over as he'd knock a bottle over with a stone. The murder of his father would

come back to Castle Conquer—he'd see to that, and to hell with what compensation he'd get for his father's death!

She came to one of the little doors that opened on the court, and it seemed to him that she called to him. He came nearer. She was looking at him steadily as if she would measure him and know him. He would stand before her. Her face would turn towards him, maybe, with elation. Then he and she would be the lord and lady of the castle, and everything that was done, even the killing of his father, would be well paid for. But her face was treacherous; even as he stood still it changed to mockery—to the mockery that was in it when she flung the primroses at him. He would take her then, and hold her body, and plant his kisses on her face and her neck and her breast. As he went towards her she pushed the door to. She was still behind it, and he would force the door. He tried to push it open with all the strength of his hands. Then he flung himself against it. Then he waited and waited. But nothing came of his effort nor of his waiting, and Mountford Woulfe, the groom, felt completely his discomfiture.

But still he stayed there; he stayed until Judkin de Courcey came into the courtyard. "What are you doing here? Why don't you go about your business?" "I'm going about my business, by God." And saying that Mountford Woulfe went out of the courtyard and out of Castle Conquer.

He went to Eglish. He spent the night in the town, spending the five shillings he had got as an aid in putting his father's murderer in a lock-up. He

drank porter and took lodgings for the night. Next day he went to Huggins, the solicitors, and gave information against the under-bailiff who was now in the asylum. He agreed to stand as witness for the defence of the men indicted for conspiracy. Mountford Woulfe's appearance at the solicitors had a great effect upon the case that was being then prepared by both sides: as a consequence of it the murder of Jonathan Woulfe was not knit to the conspiracy when it came to the trial of Francis Gillick and the others.

The day of the second trial came, and Brighid Moynagh had her uncle take her to Eglish. They started early, driving off in the dark of the early morning; it was still early in the day when they got to the sessions town, and they were able to get to mass.

Father Bartley's housekeeper was on the lookout for them. She brought Brighid to the priest's house, while Owen, knowing where he might find them, went to confer with Honor and Oona who would be with her.

Brighid was brought to her grand-uncle's house. She was left in the room she had slept in before, and she was able to rest herself for a while. And when she came down to the parlour tea was ready for her there. Father Bartley was embarrassed in his reception of the girl; at one moment he was fatherly and friendly, encouraging her to breakfast, and at another moment he was distant and chilling; at such time he would walk up and down the room, sighing and shaking his head.

The house door was shut and the blinds were

down; this was lest anyone should suspect that Brighid Moynagh was in the house. And when the housekeeper came in, he and she would speak together in whispers, as if they feared attention would be drawn to the place by speech that might be heard. As she took tea Brighid looked at the picture that was opposite her on the wall: it was the picture of Saint Martin giving half his cloak to the beggar: the beggar was looking up cheerfully; Saint Martin, a young man with a helmet on his head, was dividing a broad piece of cloth with a short sword; the horse had its oval head bent, and Brighid fancied that tears were dripping from its eyes. When she had looked at that picture before she was deep in her trouble, and it all seemed hopelessly far away from her. Now the young Saint Martin with the sword in his hand, and the beggar seated by the wayside, seemed to look at her benignantly.

And then her mother and Oona—they were brought by Owen—came in. She could not face her mother, and perhaps her mother could not face her. But at any rate the embarrassment of the moment was covered by the speaking of the two men. Before mother and daughter and sister and sister had said a word to each other Father Bartley had them all sitting at the table; he presided with great presence, and he talked to Honor with much and sudden interest, holding her attention as he bent towards her.

And Brighid, looking at her, thought to herself how greatly her mother's pride had been assailed. Old women with minds well practised in the art of

bringing out all that was suspected, had worked through her guards before the other trial. Now her face was flushed, and for a while, even there, her look was challenging. Oona came close to Brighid, and began to whisper of things that had been happening since they had last seen each other. She was drooping, and at the same time, she was very quick and very eager.

Father Bartley told them he would not go to the court with them; he had still a mass to say, he said, and after that he would have to go to a parish conference. He said a prayer for their guidance that was like a grace—a prayer for the guidance of the two who were witnesses. Their mother would not be with them; she would not show herself in the court.

As they got up she spoke to Brighid—it was the only thing she said to her—"You made a fool of me and you were made a fool of yourself, but don't let them subdue you nor make a fool of you." "I'll have no bent head, mother, never fear," Brighid said.

Owen went with them; as he and Brighid and Oona went through the long and wide passage of the courthouse the way was crowded. All the relatives of the accused men had come there, and they were talking in couples and in groups. The men from the mountains, who had Irish only, spoke in whispers, frightened of letting people know they were such "far downers." The court was filled. Brighid saw that the priest from Cahirmoy was there; he was seated at the table with the solicitors, and he was looking very serious; the trial concerned

the liberties of men whom he had counselled and taught.

John Fitzsimmons, the junior counsel, was to be seen. Owen went to him. When he came back he talked to Brighid and Oona most hopefully about the prisoners' prospects. The murder of Jonathan Woulfe could be no more made to figure in the case, and this took much substance out of the conspiracy charge. Jonathan Woulfe's son might be called as a witness for the defence. It was even possible that the grand jury might not bring in a true bill against the prisoners. Then there would be a release for them all. As she heard this Brighid herself felt like a prisoner for whom a door is opening. . . .

It was eleven o'clock and the judge had not yet appeared. . . .

But the grand jury did bring in a true bill. As before there was something of relief in the court when that verdict was handed down, and there was a gathering of strength for the trial. The prisoners appeared. And now it was "Prisoners, look to your challenges!"

There were numbers of witnesses to give testimony and to be examined. On the second day of the trial, Brighid and Oona gave evidence about the book that the charge of conspiracy rested upon. Both had to withstand a severe cross-examination, and the evidence they had given was attacked by the prosecuting counsel as something concocted under the evil influence of Francis Gillick. There were long speeches on the third day. On both sides the leading counsel and the junior spoke.

The verdict was given at the end of the third

day. It was a verdict of guilty. The sentence imposed was less than what was expected after the verdict was returned. The judge sentenced the rest of the accused to three years imprisonment, and he sentenced Francis Gillick to five years imprisonment.

Brighid was permitted to see Francis Gillick after the sentence. He was not downcast—not as downcast as she had seen him in the dock at the first trial. The sentence did not bear upon him at all. He would be out of prison soon, he told her, and then they would be always together. The people of Ireland would rise up within a year; there would be an Irish Republic, and he would be liberated.

* * * * *

It is not necessary to say that Francis Gillick's anticipation was not fulfilled. Nothing happened to disturb the government in the next year.

But an interest had been aroused in the conspiracy case, and this interest increased after sentence had been imposed. Mountford Woulfe's statement became public, and it was discussed as a political issue. The disappearance of Hugh Jinks, the informer, was made much of. The government was attacked on a vote on the Irish estimates—an attack that bore strongly on the constabulary and on the Cahirmoy case. The next government that came into power in England released Francis Gillick and the men charged with him. They had been in prison for two years.

She waited for the train. Expectedly and miraculously his face was looking for hers from the window. She went into the carriage and the train drew out from the station.

Then, before they had spoken more than bare words to each other, they were in the darkness of a tunnel. A long darkness in which he held her while the thought flickered in her mind that she would lose him again. Clear day again, and she saw that his smile was not pitiful as she had thought and that his face had strength in it. She was looking at him through her tears and he was telling her how dear she was—more than the light and the moving things outside.

The train went on. They were the only ones in the carriage. And now they talked of things remembered. Past hedges and green fields the train went, and trees upon hills, and hillsides with sheep upon them. Over all that greenness larks were singing. Then along a brown stretch of bog and over a river that had in its water the brown of the bog. Hedges and fields again and houses in a valley; they knew that in the twilight now the black-bird sang.

The train stopped. They were left on the platform and the train they had stepped from went on. "Bride and groom," someone said of them, but who they were was not known. They went out of the station and went up a road together. They were going to a house and farm that had been bought for them and where old Considine Gilroy waited for them.

CHAPTER XXX

THE MEN THAT CAME AFTER

IT WAS four decades afterwards. Francis Gillick was toughened rather than old-looking; he was spare in figure, and his quick-glancing eyes had in them now the peasant's patience.

In men who have had a term of confinement there is always a feeling of being subdued and isolated, a feeling that goes with an effort, to attach themselves once more to familiar things. Francis Gillick had that feeling and he was now making that effort. He was on his way back from a second imprisonment—this time from detention in a military camp.

Again he was on the bog-road, the road by which, in the old days, he had come to that place. Here was the last mile-stone before one came to the road that had the bohereen to the left—the bohereen that went to the place that had been Honor Paralon's.

Memories that were from a long time back were with him now, and they mingled with a more rousing recall. In this place, six months ago, he had encountered the forces of the British authority. The "Tans" had surrounded him; the dispatch he was carrying for the Republican command was found in the harness of his cart; revolvers were lifted to riddle him and leave him dead by the wayside.

That recall and the memory that went with it

were with him now. There were the turbulent, free-dealing troopers with their Scotch caps and the revolvers in their hands, and over there was a flowering whin-bush and Brighid, as he had first looked upon her, with her hair more shining than the gold of the whin. She was gone from him, and Oona, who had fallen into a decline long before, was gone, and Honor Paralon. The revolvers were raised against him.

But then a man who had authority with the most responsible of the "Tans" had dashed up and had struggled with them for Francis Gillick's life. He should have been tried by military tribunal and heavily sentenced, but for some reason he was sent to the detention camp instead. A movement for peace was under way; then there came the truce, and now, after five months, he was unexpectedly set at liberty. Summer and Autumn had gone by, and it was now December.

What had been happening? The truce that had held through the Autumn, did it still hold? And where was he likely to find Failey, his son? No one was on the upper road when he came to it. He turned up the bohereen and went towards his house. The old house that had been Honor Paralon's still stood, but it was the barn now. The house that he had built and that he and Brighid had lived in was to the right of it.

A stranger came to the door and stepped outside; he was in uniform—in the uniform of a British officer. Then the house was held by the British. Failey would not be in it; he would go into one of the other houses and find out where Failey might be.

Another officer came outside; a young man. He was Failey, his son. But in uniform! How could it be that he and the British officer were together? He stood still in his surprise. Failey and the British officer went into the house.

Francis Gillick went to the door. They were at a table, with papers before them. Failey MacUilic saw him and came and brought him in. "When were you released, father?"

"Early this morning. I have been coming ever since."

"It's grand that they've released you. Why, I wonder?"

"You'll have to tell me that. Are you going to tell me that we've got the Republic?"

"No. It looks more as if negotiations were going to be broken off. We're preparing for that."

The British officer spoke. "I suppose they're going to let them all out. They might as well. This defeatist government is going to put your—what shall I call your organization?" He turned to Failey MacUilic.

"The Republican Army, sir."

"The Republican Army, if you will. It is going to put them in charge of everything."

Failey MacUilic introduced the former prisoner of war to the British officer. He was Colonel Seagrave. "Colonel Seagrave and I are liaison officers," he said.

"Does the truce still hold?" Francis Gillick asked anxiously.

"It does. But we're preparing for its termination, Colonel Seagrave and I."

Colonel Seagrave handled the papers on the table. "You know what I think about the truce," he said. "Not for one day has it been kept in spirit on your part. I don't mean you personally, Mr. ——"

"Commandant."

"Commandant. You have done everything you could. But the spirit of the people on your side has been a bad one. There have been even more evasions than the ones I have discussed with you."

"I know," said Failey MacUilic earnestly. "And you have been very patient to keep acting with me, Colonel. And about the machine guns——"

"I know what your fellows will say about them. They'll be like the girl's baby—very little machine guns."

Failey MacUilic smiled. "Well, the Thompson machine gun is a very little machine gun. You say they're being distributed from the camp in Castle Conquer. We'll both go there and talk to Colonel-Commandant Ryan about them. You know Ryan, the American soldier? You'll find him a very honest and candid man. But if you'll permit me I'll have a talk with my father first."

"Oh, go ahead. If you don't mind I'll eat my sandwiches at this table." Colonel Seagrave was an authoritative soldier of sixty; he found it difficult to treat the young men of his former tenantry as officers and gentlemen and to accept their rebel organization as an army. His sense of duty was keen, however, and he had honourably carried out his duties as liaison officer between the British and the Irish Republicans. He thought that the anti-

British side had taken every advantage; if and when the truce ended they would be in a better position than ever before to carry on the guerilla war.

Father and son went into a room where another of Francis's children was waiting for him. This was Oona. She was the second child, Brighid being the first, and Failey, born some years after Oona, being the third and last of the children. There was something nun-like about Oona—something as if she had secluded herself and was not quite at home in a house. Already she had left some food on the table for her father. She greeted him, and after a while went away, leaving him and Failey to talk together.

* * * * *

Battalion-Commandant Failey MacUilic was thirty years of age; he had been in Dublin where he was going through the university on money that his grand-uncle Owen had left him when the Volunteers were formed. He drilled with them. He was not, however, in the Dublin insurrection. Afterwards he entered the militant movement that grew up in the country, and in the summer he was in his native county organizing for the Volunteers.

He headed one of the first attacks that were made on the Constabulary barracks in the country—the attack on Cahirmoy barracks. This was for the purpose of getting arms. A good many rifles were obtained by the attack, but the destruction of the barracks was not effected.

At the time the people had no cohesion, and the

system of keeping the men who were "on the run" was not perfected. The Constabulary went after Failey and they caught him. He was deported and put in prison in England. That was just as the guerilla warfare began.

In those days Failey MacUilic was a tall, meditative sort of young fellow, fresh and open-faced, with the sapphire that belonged to his mother in his eyes. His face was still fresh and open but his hair was grey. This grey hair with his upright figure in its uniform made him look the thoughtful professional soldier. (In the literal terms of the truce he should not appear in uniform, but it was expedient on account of his liaison duties that he should appear as an officer of the Irish Republican Army.)

When he was in prison in England the leadership of the Volunteers went to his sister's son, young Michael Leonard. This youth gave the companies in that countryside an amazing dash and spirit. As a leader he was extraordinarily resourceful and extraordinarily lucky in his coups and in his escapes. He destroyed the court-house in Eglish that was headquarters for a British intelligence staff. He took Castle Conquer that had been turned into barracks after the destruction of the Constabulary barracks in the districts around: this capture was really a great coup; it was the means of getting rifles and explosives for the Volunteers of that county and two counties around.

Young Michael Leonard was often "on the run," but he was daring, and, trusting in his luck and in his ability to make a get-away in a district that he

thoroughly knew, he often stayed around places where the soldiers and the constabulary were looking for him. He trusted in his luck too often. He was captured while he was visiting his sister. Reprisals were now on and terrorization had become the military policy. At the age of nineteen Michael Leonard was tried, condemned, and hanged for the part he had taken in the guerilla war.

Failey MacUilic escaped from his prison in England when Michael Leonard was at the beginning of his successes. He managed to get to Sweden where he went on with his engineering studies. These finished, and the fighting in his country still on, he decided to take up soldiering again. He was on his way through England when he saw the announcement of the hanging of Michael Leonard.

Very vividly Francis Gillick remembered his son's return. "Failey will come—the quicklime won't have burnt into my brother before Failey will be here to take his place." That is what Brighid, Michael's sister, kept saying as she went about the house that she had come to—his house—with her set face. And Failey did come, he came in the night even as Brighid was speaking of him. Brighid with his own Brighid's bright hair! She put her arms around his neck when he came into the house; he had not to tell her that he had come back to take her brother's place. "Whether you are on the hills, or whether you are in their gaol; whether you have them before you with your guns on them, or whether you are stealing away from them, you will remember young Michael with the rope around his neck," she said. And Failey told her he would remember.

He gave the Volunteers—now organized as a section of the Republican Army—a more elaborate organization, creating a commissariat and an intelligence service. Failey MacUilic made a steady and patient leader. It was during his leadership that the constabulary were forced out of the district. He saved the town of Cahirmoy from a burning. The "Tans" were coming back that way after having rushed to a place near Eglish where there had been an ambush and had they got into Cahirmoy they would have fired the place by way of reprisals. Failey MacUilic with a very few men held them back: the night was dark, and a fire from men well-posted made the "Tans" feel they had a big force against them; towards daylight they drew off, leaving a few dead and wounded, and Cahirmoy was saved from their petrol-cans and their explosives.

This was the battalion-commandant's most considerable operation. But his real service was that he kept the companies together and kept their morale up in face of the irruption of the "Black and Tans."

To his father there was a great deal that was unfamiliar about Failey as he stood at the table, talking about the truce, about conditions in the country, about the prospects of peace. He had seen little of him since he had taken Michael Leonard's place: between that time and the time of Francis Gillick's capture while carrying a dispatch, Failey had been only three nights in the house. Indeed, Francis Gillick now realized that there was something unexpected and unfamiliar about the world he had come back to.

The Chief had been down, Failey went on to tell him; he had ordered them to take up intensive drill: hence the camp at Castle Conquer. There was a good deal in Colonel Seagrave's complaints, he admitted. The young men were rather anxious to resume fighting; they underestimated the British staying power; that was because the British had given a truce that covered the bright months. "Last year we weren't able to move a man in the nights of July and August; nothing could have stirred in the country in the months that the truce covered. Now we have the dark nights again, and can move around. The boys think that the truce meant that the British are ready to give up."

"Are they, do you think?" Francis Gillick asked anxiously. "And are we going to get the Republic?"

"It would be hard for them to let us have a Republic," said Failey. "It's likely that negotiations will be broken off," he said, and his father saw that there was a cloud of anxiety on his face.

"I don't think they'll be broken off," said Francis Gillick. "Why did they release me to-day—me and others, maybe—if they thought the fighting was to go on?"

"That's a point surely, father. Well, I'll have to fix things up for Colonel Seagrave now. We are going to Castle Conquer together."

"I'll go with you if you'll let me. I want to go to Castle Conquer with you in that uniform beside me, Failey."

Then Failey MacUilic joined Colonel Seagrave at the table in the other room. Francis Gillick

watched them as they sat together arranging some matter.

Colonel Seagrave was a good officer, Failey had said, and a fair man. Maybe he would have been as grasping and as domineering as his father if his father's place had been left to him. But the Seagraves were no longer amongst the lords of the soil: Francis Gillick had helped to arrange the terms that transferred the lands around Cahirmoy to the tenants. That was nearly twenty years ago now; the young people who had grown up since had no notion of what their struggle had been.

"Did Failey remember hearing the name of Martin Jordan?" he mused, as he looked at his son and the landowner's son. "It was on Martin Jordan's account I went into the fight about the land. Or was it, though? I wanted to fight to make Ireland nobody's but our own—land and flag and all. Things have never the shining end that one dreams they'll have. The day we were rid of landlordism wasn't as shining as I thought it would be the night I slept on a sack of heather-tops beside Martin Jordan's fire. And it will be the same the day we'll see the English soldiers leave our land. That's how it is: the fight is over while our ears are still dinned with the noise, and our arms are still aching with the weight of what we are holding."

He was on his feet and ready to go and join Failey and Colonel Seagrave when his daughter came into the room. Her voice was a difficult whisper; when she greeted him before she could barely make herself heard: this strangely low voice

had made Oona, too, seem far away from him. She had a cold—it was that that checked her voice.

“Thank God you’re back, father,” she whispered. He said to her, “Has everything gone all right, daughter?”

“Failey,” she whispered. “I had such a bad dream about him, father.”

“What did you dream, Oona?”

“It was a dream that came more than once . . . I never had such a dream before. . . . Not even when he was on the run. . . . I saw him lying, father . . . dead.”

“He’s safe; Failey’s safe, Oona.”

“But the dream, father! It came more than once. I saw him lying in a place that you once took me to . . . Castle Conquer. . . . That place, for I knew the walls.”

“He won’t be in Castle Conquer. There’s another officer there now. Oona, your dreams won’t count any more. I’m home, and that means that there’s peace on the way.”

She had had those fitful dreams since the death of Michael Leonard. She stood there now in her softness, her withdrawal, her head, with its faintly red hair, bent. She raised her eyes to him to say something, but her voice failed completely; she went out of the room.

Slowly he, too, went out. Nothing would happen to Failey, he told himself; nothing could happen now. He went towards where his son with Colonel Seagrave was waiting for him.

On the way to Castle Conquer he struggled to

make himself part of all this dramatic proceedings. This was his son in Irish military uniform. They were going to a camp of Irish soldiers in Castle Conquer. And on the tower that was within the walls he had taken from Luke Leonard the oath that had made him one of the I.R.A. That Irish Republican Army had turned out to be a shadowy entity. But his son who was walking so purposively beside him belonged to an I.R.A. that was not shadowy. At last one dream of the people had turned into a reality.

And the oath that Luke Leonard had given him on the tower had never been forgotten by him. They had given him no active service in the companies that had so amazingly grown up in the last few years. But he had been able to help again and again. And Luke Leonard's and his daughter's son had been the man who had put the flag of the Irish Republic over the tower and the keep of Castle Conquer. As they went up the avenue he heard his son speaking to Colonel Seagrave about those who had owned the place. "The de Courceys. None of them are left now. The estate was sold out to the tenants at the time that your people sold, Colonel."

Through a breach that had been made in a wall by an explosion he saw some of those who were encamped there. A fire had been lighted; men were cooking, men were standing around; men were going through an exercise with sticks. Fine young fellows. And yet, as soldiers will seem to an onlooker, they seemed to Francis Gillick as if they might have a different speech and be moved by impulses that

were apart from his. Faithful, alien men! The men of the I.R.A. encamped in Castle Conquer.

And then their commander appeared. Colonel-Commandant Ryan was a spare and grizzled Irish soldier who had served in the American army. He had been in Ireland for over a year, helping the Republican Staff. The Chief, when he had come here, had brought Colonel-Commandant Ryan with him and had placed him over the training camp that had been formed.

He came to them, the first soldier wearing glasses that Francis Gillick had seen; he had on some drab attire that might be a uniform. He saluted the two officers; Battalion-Commandant MacUilic spoke to him about Colonel Seagrave's complaint.

He told them that they had had no machine-gun drill there and that no machine guns were being distributed from the camp. Three Thompson guns had come into his charge, and if Colonel Seagrave liked he would show him how they were assembled and operated.

Colonel Seagrave was professionally interested; he had not yet seen this particular machine gun. Then Colonel-Commandant Ryan held up his hand. "I wish you gentlemen would come with me to the tower that's over there," he said. "I have something to show you that may be even more important than these new machine guns."

They went with him; they went into O'Failey's Tower over which the Republican tricolor was flying. Colonel-Commandant Ryan spread out a newspaper he had been carrying. On the front page was the text of the treaty that had been signed between

the representatives of Great Britain and the representatives of Ireland. Francis Gillick looked down and read the signatures. "What is it?" he asked.

"The Irish Free State," Failey answered after reading some paragraphs.

"What does it give us?"

Someone read "Common citizenship." "The King." "Oath of faithfulness." Francis Gillick sighed and looked up to where the tricolor flag was flying. "There was bound to be a compromise," Failey said. "But look what it says—the English will leave Ireland. We'll have our army here."

"It looks quite a proposition," said the Americanized soldier, "but I'll wait until I hear a bit more."

"After holding the country for seven hundred years they leave it like this," said the British officer. "They have been scolded out of the country—that's all—a masculine race put out by feminine hustle. I suppose there's no more to be said about it."

And so they talked of the event. Francis Gillick looked up to the top wall of the tower. That was where he and Luke Leonard had been when he saw before him the struggle to put the English out of Ireland. How strangely it was all being taken now! He looked at his own son, standing there firm and thoughtful; he looked at the British officer and the unfamiliar Americanized soldier. A name from the Greek was in his mind—"the men that came after"—the men without a story who had taken Troy after the Iliad closed!

But it was over, it was over, and there was relief in that. He laid his hand on his son's shoulder.

Flesh and bone were beneath his hand. He knew now how much Oona's dream had troubled him. Failey would stand firm and thoughtful as he saw him now, even though there was one who had met a death to keep sorrowful over—Luke Leonard's son.

He went out of the tower. Away from the Castle he went; men were singing some martial song within it. He went towards the gate. And on the avenue he met Brigid, Luke Leonard's daughter.

"I was looking at the place that Michael left his mark on," she said to him.

She had the bright and abundant hair of his own Brigid, but hers was a set and a lonely face. Her voice when she spoke was harsh.

"Have you heard, Brigid," he said, "that all the fighting is over?"

"I haven't heard that the fighting is over. Is it because men have put their names to something?" she said bitterly.

"Good men and brave men have put their names to it," he said.

"Let them put what names they like. They won't put away what Michael Leonard died for. There are men in the camp there that will fight for what he fought for, no matter what names were put to a paper. We to take their King and what they'd give us!"

"And would you have the fighting go on, Brigid?"

"It will go on. And let Failey now take his side for fighting there will be as sure as that sky is above us."

It seemed to him that he was pleading with her for his son's safety when he said—"They'll leave everything here to be our own; no one will have any call but ourselves on what's on Ireland's ground."

He stopped, for he had no way of conveying to this girl how much had been won. And she stayed under the dark yew tree that was at the gate, looking towards where the men were in camp, while he went out upon the road.

The fields were bare, for it was winter, and the streams were bright with the imminence of frost. He went along between the old elm trees and the broken uplands at the time when the rooks were flying back. Then it seemed to him that he had known all who had gone this highway, and knowing them, had sorrow for them all—for those who had gone proudly by in grand coaches, and for those who had lain in the ditches with murderous thoughts, watching them go by; for those who had ridden hunters with hounds following them, and for those who had been driven from the lands that the hounds coursed over, and who looked on the huntsmen from desolate doorways; for those who had delved into the uplands there, and for those who had gambled them away between a midnight and a morning; for the heavy-browed trooper of Oliver Cromwell and the mighty swayer of the broad-sword who had resisted him to the last; for the man of the broken clann, for the betrayer of his people carrying his chief's head as a token of submission, for the flaunting squireen and the tenants' daughters he had shamed, for the emigrants who carried in their ears their peoples' *caoine* for their going, for the banished men and the

men who judged them; for the de Courceys who had left no name behind them; for Paddy Sharkey, the fool, who came back into his mind now after having been forgotten for many years; for Martin Jordan who had died in the poorhouse; for his own grandson, young Michael Leonard, whose death had brought into their own days the terror of other centuries. All, all were alike held in the memory of that land, and one for the sake of the other. And with compassion Francis Gillick thought of each of them, as he went between the uplands and the elms of Castle Conquer demesne on that windy December day.

